

A ROMAN LADY'S TOILET.

THE toilet of a Roman lady involved an elaborate and very costly process. It commenced at night, when the face, supposed to have been tarnished by exposure, was overlaid with a poultice composed of boiled or moistened flour, spread on with the fingers. Poppæan unguents sealed the lips, and the lady was profusely rubbed with Cerona ointment. In the morning, the poultice and unguents were washed off; a bath of asses' milk imparted a delicate whiteness to the skin; and the pale face was freshened and revived with enamel. The full eyelids, which the Roman lady still knows so well how to use—now suddenly raising them, to reveal a glance of surprise or of melting tenderness, now letting them drop, like a veil, over the lustrous eyes—the full, rounded eyelids were colored within, and a needle, dipped in jetty dye, gave length and sphericity to the eyebrows. The forehead was encircled by a wreath or fillet, fastened in the luxuriant hair, which rose in front in a pyramidal pile, formed of successive ranges of curls, and giving the appearance of more than ordinary height.

AUNT TABITHA'S FIRESIDE.

NO. XI.—WHAT BEFELL ABEL HODGKINS.

BY EDITH WOODLEY.

"Wiv, Paul, where have you been this cold evenin'?"

"In the first place, aunt, I called to see Harry Lowe a little while, and then when I started for home, the evening was so clear and so beautiful, I was tempted to stop and look at the galaxy and some of the other stars."

"The gal Achsah, did you say? Well, what you can see in Achsah Packard more than in any other gal about here 'twould puzzle a lawyer to tell. Accordin' to my mind, she isn't half so handsome, and hasn't half so purty a way with her as Sally Green."

"You misunderstood me, aunt. I didn't mean"—

"La, Paul, you needn't try to blind me. I can see through a pine board as well as anybody. I've seen this long time, and I've spoke of it to Lizzy, that you'd taken a likin' to Achsah."

"Why, no, I haven't, aunt. I didn't mean that I'd been stopping to look at her. I meant that"—

"Never mind. I shall take you as it is, not as you say. I don't expect you to own that you care any more about her than you do the rest of the gals, and, to tell the truth, I don't like to see young folks brazen-faced about sich things. Speakin' of Achsah Packard makes me think of her aunt, Achsah Merrill, that was. She used to be a schoolmate of mine, and was forty times as handsome as her namesake is or ever will be. Come along, Paul, and set down by the fire, and I'll tell you and Lizzy about one of her old sparks. His name was Abel Hodgkins. You've heern me tell of Abel many a time. Well, he'd lived along till he got to be nigh on to forty year old without as much as ever goin' to see any of the gals, or even waitin' on one of 'em home from meetin' or singin'-school. His sister Nabby kept his house for him. She was a widder, but had no children, so they took Sim Hodgkins, their brother's youngest son, to live with 'em. Sim was bright and as smart as a steel trap, but terrible wild and mischievous. He needed somebody to carry a stiddier hand with him than either his Uncle Abel or Aunt Nabby. Well, one evenin'—I was about sixteen year old—I

took my knittin'-work, and went in to chat with Nabby a little while. I al'ays called her Nabby, though she was old enough to be my mother, for we were near neighbors, and there was scarce a day that we didn't see each other. When I went in, Abel was settin' afore the fire, to all appearance in a brown study. He jest nodded when he seed who it was, and that was all the notice he took of me. By and by, he looked up all of sudding, and said to Nabby: 'I want you to tie my cue, and powder my hair jest as cute as you can.'

"What on airth is in the wind now, Abel?" said she.

"I've thoughts of goin' over to see neighbor Merrill a little while," says he.

"Well, what if you have?" says she. "I don't see as that's any reason for your havin' your hair powdered. If 'twas Sunday, 'twould be a different thing, but secin' it's on'y a week day, 'twould look kind o' ridiculous like, accordin' to my way of thinkin'."

"I guess I know what I'm about," says he, "and if you aint a mind to do it, Sim will, I know."

"I'm sure," says Nabby, "I've no objection to doin' it, on'y I'm afeared 'twill make you an object of ridicule, as 'twere."

"You needn't worry about that," says he.

"So, Nabby didn't stop to argue the case any longer, for she knew that when he once got sot on anything, you couldn't any more turn him than you could turn a meetin'-house. As I said, she didn't stop to argufy, but went right along, and got her little paper box half full of boughten flour, and her powder-puff. Arter she'd tied his cue with a new black ribbon he took out his pocket, that he'd bought unbeknown to her, she gave his hair a good powderin'. She didn't spare the flour a bit, and by the time she'd finished, Abel's head looked as if it had come right out of a meal-bag. He then went, solemn as you ever seed anything, and put on his best coat and waistcoat. The waist coat was kerzeymere, fire new, and a bright scarlet color. His coat was bluish. Nabby spun and wove it, and meant to have had it a sky blue, but, by some means or other, she didn't

have good luck colorin' it. When he got rigged out, he looked gay as a lark, I can tell you. When he went out, he told Nabby that, if he didn't come back by ten o'clock, she needn't set up for him.

"Oh," says she, 'seein' Tabitha has come to spend the evenin' with me, I sha'n't feel tired if you stay till 'leven. Did you ever?' says Nabby, the minute he was gone, and that was all she said about it; but Sim, who'd been sittin' in the corner, to all appearance as sober as a judge, jumped up and danced about the room as if he was possessed of an evil spirit, cryin' out: 'Three cheers for Uncle Abel! He's gone to see Achsah Merrill.'

"It was a good mile to where Mr. Merrill lived if you went round the road, but there was a kind of a cart-path through the fields and pastures to accommodate people about haulin' their winter's wood, so Abel thought he'd jest cut across rather than to go round, 'cause he'd have to have the trouble of a horse if he went by the road. 'Twas a cool evenin', the latter end of October, though 'twa'n't cold enough to freeze, and while he jogged along, he thought of Achsah's sparklin' eyes, and how spruce he looked in his blue coat and red waistcoat. There was a brisk nor'west wind a blowin', and arter he got past a piece of woods, there was nothin' to prevent its havin' a purty free rake across the fields and pastures. Arter a while, he had to make a turn, and then it blew full in his face, so he thought he might as well button up his coat. This naterally, as 'twere, as he had a nice large flock of sheep, brought to his mind the price of wool, and that, by what old Major Fogg used to call a 'sociation of idees,' made him think how much mutton was likely to be a pound. From that, he went on to settle it in his own mind what would naterally be the difference between trustin' a spell, or sellin' for cash paid right down on the nail, as the sayin' is, when a brisk light, shinin' from farmer Merrill's window, turned his thoughts from the sheep back to Achsah. If it hadn't been for that, I r'aly b'leve he'd 'ave calc'lated to a hair what the whole flock of sheep would 'ave come to. Well, you see, the sky was overcast. There wa'n't a star to be seen; and while he'd been reckonin' up about the sheep, grad'ally and by degrees, as 'twere, he'd strayed out of the cart-path. As soon as he seed the light, he found he'd lost the path, and while he was tryin' to find it ag'in, all of a suddin' he lost his footin', and slipped right into a clay-pit. Abel was purty spry, and, by some means or other, his hand happened to come ag'in the roots of a tree

that grew close to the edge of the pit, which had been left bare by diggin' away the clay. He continued to catch hold of 'em, and cried out for help with all his might. No one answered; but arter a while, he heerd a horse comin', and he said to himself: 'That's the step of old Dobbin, I know.'

"That's where you're right, uncle," said Sim, ridin' up close to the clay-pit.

"Well, do get off the horse, and take hold of my hand, and help me out, for my strength is a'most spent. I can't hold on but a dreadful little while longer."

"'Cause you're in, it's no reason that you should pull me in," says Sim; 'but never fear, uncle. I know a way to have you out in a trice. Here, Dobbin,' says he to the horse, 'you needn't s'pose you're goin' to be idle;' and with that, Sim took the bridle, and tied it round one of Dobbin's hind legs. He then threw the end to his uncle.

"Mind and hold on fast, Uncle Abel," says he; 'and takin' Dobbin by the mane, he tried to make him step for'ard. But though Dobbin in his younger days, afore he'd had his sperits broke by draggin' the cart and plough, had a trick of jumpin' from the pasture into the field, 'specially when the pasture was short, and the clover was in bloom, and so was obleeged to have some kind of a clog tied to his leg a great part of the time, he had never, in his wildest days, been used to sich a heavy clog as Abel was; so Sim, with all his coaxin', and whistlin', and cherrupin', and pullin' at his mane, couldn't make him stir a step. There he stood, with his fore-feet planted in the clayey airth jest as fairm as the hills. But Sim had never larnt the art of tyin' a sailor's knot, nor yet a weaver's knot, for the one he tied in the bridle soon gave way, and Dobbin sprung for'ard as nimble as if he'd been a two year old colt. At the same time, he neighed jest as loud as he could, he was so glad, you see, 'cause he'd got clear. But the noise the horse made was nothin' to what came out of the clay-pit when Abel found himself fallin'. He was so scairt, he never tried to save himself a bit, and so fell his whole length on the ground. Mr. Merrill heerd him, and snatchin' up the tongs, for he didn't know but that somebody was committin' murder, he run as fast as he could to the place where the cries seemed to come from. His wife and darter follered on arter him, Miss Merriell with a long-handled skimmer (for she was jest a skimmin' a kittle of sweet cider they were bilin' down to make apple-sass with), and Achsah with a lantern.

"'Who's there?' said Mr. Merrill, as soon as he got to the place.

"'It's I,' answered Abel.

"'Well, why don't you come out and show yourself? Here 's a good stout ladder.'

"'How can I,' says Abel, 'when I'm all smashed to pieces, and can't stir an inch?'

"'With that, Mr. Merrill took the lantern, and went down the ladder.

"'Well, neighbor Hodgkins,' says he, 'let me see some of your bruises. Whereabouts are they?'

"'If you 're all smashed to pieces,' says Sim, 'it's rather strange, for when you hung there, holdin' on to the roots of the tree, you wa'n't more'n six inches from the bottom of the pit. I knew it all the time, but thought I'd have a little sport tryin' to make Dobbin pull you out.'

"'Abel was so 'shamed when Sim told him this—for he could see by the light of the lantern he spoke the truth—that he sprung up from the ground, and run up the ladder jest as spry as a cat. He meant to have boxed Sim's ears—and he sartainly richly desarved it for lettin' his uncle hold on to the roots of the tree, a'most frightened out of his wits, when he knew all the time he was in no more danger than if he'd a been at home, sittin' in the chimbley corner; but Sim took good care to keep out of the reach of his uncle's hand.

"'Mr. Merrill and his wife were terrible air-nest for Abel to go home with 'em, and dry his clothes, but they couldn't persuade him to, for he knew well enough that he was a sight to be seen, with his clothes all daubed over with clay. Whether or no they had any suspicion

that he'd sot out on purpose to come and see their darter when he got sarved so, I don't know. I guess though they didn't mistrust anything of the kind, for he was old enough to be Achsah's father. However, it wa'n't long afterwards afore they had a hint of it.

"'Arter he'd come home, and got on some dry clothes, as he sot afore the fire, with a pint mug of hot ginger-tea in his hand Nabby had made him, to keep him from takin' cold, he looked kind o' solemn like right straight into the mug as much as a minute, as if he was tryin' to spy out somethin' at the bottom of it. He then cast a kind of sidelong glance at me, at the same time smilin' the least bit in the world.

"'Tabitha,' says he, 'I'll tell you what.'

"'Well,' says I.

"'If you should ever,' says he—and then he give a kind of merry twinkle with his eyes—'I say, if you should ever fall in love, and the swain should prove hardhearted, and not return your pertiality, you needn't be worried a bit.'

"'Why?' says I.

"'Cause,' says he, 'I've this evenin' had the good fortin to find out a sovereign remedy for love.'

"'Pray, what is it?' says I.

"'A good cool plaster made of clay,' says he; and then he put the mug to his lips, and drunk down full half of the tea without once stoppin' to take breath.

"'And I guess he spoke the truth as far as he himself was consarned, for he was never known to set out to go a courtin' ag'in from that day to this.'

BY-WAY SORROWS.

BY LILA M. LAIRD.

CHAPTER I.

A SERPENT coiled around a heart. On that heart, the initials deep and bold, "A. W." What a grim seal it was! so black, so heavy; the serpent's tiny folds and forked tongue so clearly defined.

Hannah wiped her spectacles upon her check apron, and looked keenly over my shoulder.

"A very ugly, unnatural kind of a seal it is; don't, Miss Fanny, sit there any longer and look at it."

But I kept my seat. To be sure, it was a *very* small matter, that bit of black wax carelessly torn from a letter. I hardly knew why I had picked it up; yet, as it lay before me on the cherry-wood table, I gazed upon it with a strange, vague terror.

Aunt Esther came into the room a little while after. She had an open letter in her hand, and, as she sat down beside me, she bade me listen while she read—

"Your school-committee have engaged my services for the year. I shall be happy during that time to board with you. Your terms suit me, dear madam, and as you promised me a quiet home, I hope to remain with you all the while I am in Chipdale. ALICE WARREN."

"Why don't you speak, Fanny?" asked my aunt, as she folded the letter, and put it into her pocket. "I thought you were anxious Miss Warren should board with us; but now you do not seem satisfied."

"I don't think I will like her, Aunt Esther," I muttered, pushing, at the same time, the bit of wax towards her. "See there, what a strange seal she has put upon her letter; a *serpent-seal*!"

"You are a silly child," returned my aunt; and as she looked upon the device, she smiled, and said, as the old servant had done, "that it was certainly a very ugly, unnatural seal;" then she brushed it from the window, and falling amongst the long grass, I saw it no more.

But I was a dreamy, imaginative child; and the strange seal, which Alice Warren had perhaps unwittingly used, worked out its own mission with me.

"A splendid woman, that Miss Warren. May-be a little cold and proud; but, I take it, Mrs. Raynor, she has had her share of trouble."

"Is she pretty, Mr. Whyte?" I asked, timidly peeping up in the school-committee man's face.

"Well, *rather* so, Miss Fanny; but she knows a good deal, any how; and if she manages to keep you young ones to your books, that is all that is necessary. She stands very high in the city where she taught, and her testimonials are very good;" and Mr. Whyte walked away no little elated with his success.

The crimson days of October were fast fading away, and very soon now, in the early part of November, was Miss Warren to be with us. In the mean while, Chipdale was in a stir. The old school-house, under the superintendence of the committee-men, was repaired and neatly fitted up. The village children, who had been running wild, or, at the best, only occasionally going to the district school, were gathering up their books and well-thumbed primers, and waiting, with much anxiety, the arrival of the new teacher. And we were busy at home. Aunt Esther, it was true, had long been settled from her regular fall cleaning; but then she had many preparations to make, and the brightest and best room in the house must be put in complete readiness for Miss Warren.

In the mean while, I awaited the coming of my new teacher with a strange sort of dread. I could not forget the *serpent-seal*. Such a chill gray afternoon it was when Mr. Whyte set off in his carriage to meet Miss Warren at the neighboring railway station. The evening closed in yet more chilly and gloomy; and I sat by the window, harkening to the winds moaning amongst the tall pines, and looking out upon the dark and starless sky until I heard Mr. Whyte speaking to his horse close by our gate. Then I let the long crimson curtain fall slowly back over the window, and going to a dark corner of the room, sat down there quietly. My aunt snatched up a light, and hurried into the hall; but I did not follow her. And at last the packages were taken from the carriage. Mr. Whyte rapidly drove off, and then I heard the front door close, and footsteps crossing the hall.

"Come from your corner, Fanny. Here, Miss

Warren, is one of your pupils ; my niece, Fanny Raynor."

A faint, though very sweet smile was Miss Warren's only acknowledgment of my courtesy ; and then, complaining of weariness, she threw herself back in my aunt's great cushioned chair. As she sat there with her large black eyes languidly closed, the red fire-light shone full in her face. Surely, Mr. Whyte had spoken without knowledge. Miss Warren *was* beautiful, yet hers was a mournful beauty. Perhaps it was the rich folds of raven hair which shaded her high forehead, and the deep black dress she wore, which gave to her face its ghastly whiteness ; but around the exquisitely curved mouth hung an expression of great suffering, almost agony.

"Are you sick, Miss Warren?" I asked, noticing that, through the thin white fingers pressed over her eyes, the tears were fast falling. "Not any worse than usual, for, indeed," she added, with a slight smile, "I *never* am *very* well ; but to-night I am so tired."

The supper-table, with its snowy cloth and tempting array of good things, looked very pleasant ; but Miss Warren took her seat at it half mechanically ; she sipped her coffee listlessly, and scarcely ate a morsel. Aunt Esther was disappointed ; she *always* was when any one failed to eat with zest at *her* table.

"But poor Miss Warren," she afterwards said, "looked more that night like dying than eating."

Miss Warren went back to her seat by the fire ; and as she sat there, I could do nothing but look at her, and always with tearful eyes. That black figure in the great chair, with its snowy face and mournfully gleaming eyes, seemed to my young heart the very emblem of woe—despair. Aunt Esther went up with Miss Warren to her chamber, and when she came down, she looked perplexed.

"Only think, Fanny," she said ; "I could not get Miss Warren past the 'dark room,' as you call it. She insisted upon taking it for her room, although I showed her the pleasant bright one over the parlor I had fixed just for her. She gave me one of her snowy-like smiles, and said, 'if it made no difference to me, she would prefer this one ; it accorded better with her feelings.' So, there she is now."

I knew the dark room well ; it was wide and long, with but one window ; and though that was broad, yet its panes were heavily draped with the creeping honeysuckle, and the tall pines without threw in their great black shadows, so the room in winter or summer was gloomy. The furniture, too, was grim and old. And I shud-

dered to think of Miss Warren's feelings being in accord with the dark room. That night the old pines creaked and moaned, for the wind swept wildly through them, and the rain fell with a mournful, sobbing sound.

And sometimes, when there came a little calm, I heard—for I could not sleep—faint murmurings, and a half hushed voice of weeping ; and I knew that these sounds came from the "dark room." Miss Warren had said she was weary ; but she kept sad vigils that night ; and thus, amidst tears and gloom, commenced her life in our village.

CHAPTER II.

MISS WARREN turned to her new duties with earnestness. She labored faithfully ; and it seemed, to me, that her toil became a sort of shield betwixt herself and the bitter memory of a great woe. Ere the snows fell, every one in Chipdale, from the little school child to the old woman in her cushioned chair, had learned to regard Miss Warren with a loving pity. That "the new teacher" had some blighting sorrow upon her young heart all knew ; what that sorrow was none might judge.

"Now, Fanny, knock very softly at Miss Warren's door ; and when you give her this tea, tell her I sent it to her, and that it will do her good ;" and Aunt Esther placed in my hands the little tray, and sat down to her sewing.

"Stay with me a while, Fanny. I am so lonely."

I was turning to go down stairs again, but when Miss Warren spoke, I shut the door.

"Oh, Miss Alice, you have been crying ! Are you very sick ? Can I do anything for you ? anything to make you happy ?" and I knelt down beside her.

"Can you do anything for me ? Poor child, you make me smile. Why, Fanny, can you lift a mountain from its place ? You cannot. Well, then, just as soon can you or any other being take this sorrow from my heart."

"God can, Miss Alice," I whispered, half frightened by the wildness of her manner.

"I know it," she replied ; "and it is this, *this* alone"—touching her little Bible—"which can ever give me the least ray of comfort."

Then my young teacher leaned her head upon my shoulder and cried ; and when at last her sobs were stilled, she raised her eyes to mine.

"Do you think you will *ever* love me, Fanny ?" she asked.

"Oh, if you will only let me !"

was going to tell her how much my heart was yearning over her; but I thought of the strange misty coldness which always hung round her. Something seemed to chill me, and stopping short, I hid my face upon the thin white hand I held.

"If I will let you, did you say? Fanny Raynor, I am like yourself, an orphan; but, unlike you, I have no dear home, no kind hearts to love me. My spirit is so lonely, child. Will you not come close to me, and let me love you?"

I answered Miss Warren with loving, earnest words; and she was satisfied, for she listened with a mournful smile, and said, gravely: "Be it so; and now, Fanny, love me always; love me forever."

I was very young, yet I was thoughtful for my years, and though Alice Warren was much older than myself, there sprang up between us a quick, tender friendship, full of love and sympathy.

They were all wild, sad pictures, each one telling its own tale; but one from all the others I gazed at with painful intensity. I laid it before me in the yellow sunlight. I could not lift my eyes from it. I seemed to be charmed. And this was the picture; a slight youthful figure in pilgrim dress hurrying along a rugged path strewn with sharp flinty stones; the tender feet of the pilgrim were cut and bleeding; her hands were pressed over her eyes, as though in sad despair. Before her, the way seemed even more drear and rugged, whilst behind her stretched a fair and lovely land, goodly to the eye. In this figure, there was much expressive of deep and bitter suffering, mingled with a stern determination to press onward. I looked at this picture in amazement. Alice Warren bent over me.

"You seem to like it, Fanny. I painted that not long before I came to you. I have named all my pictures. I call that 'Duty's Pilgrim.'"

Then Miss Warren crossed the room; and when she returned, she held in her hand a roll of paper. This, after a moment's hesitation, she spread upon the table before me, and stepped back a few paces.

What made me gaze for a few moments so stonily, and then spring suddenly from my chair? What made me shrink from Alice Warren, and hide my eyes in the long folds of the white counterpane? It was only a little crayon sketch which lay there in the evening sunlight; but to me it was terrible.

A young fair girl struggling in the coils of a great serpent. The countenance wore the im-

press of agony, and yet it seemed to me that the full dark eyes rested upon the hideous reptile with an expression of strange, reproachful tenderness. *Alice Warren* was written upon the edge of the sketch in clear, bold characters.

"Get up, Fanny," said Miss Warren, calmly. "Don't kneel there any longer by the bed. Get up, and tell me how you like my picture. Nay, child, won't you admire my handiwork?"

"I am afraid of you, Miss Alice," I cried out; "you are strange; you are terrible. What does that horrible picture mean? Why did you put the seal of a serpent even upon a letter?"

"An emblem, a mere type," returned Miss Warren, musingly.

"Of what, Miss Alice?" I asked.

"Of myself, of my own condition; for—oh, Fanny!" she exclaimed, falling on her knees beside me on the floor, "terrible coils are around me, around my heart even at this moment, fearful, yet beloved in their fearfulness. I am striving to break them. I am utterly wretched. Child, pity me."

"I do, dear Miss Alice. Can I help you?"

"No, no. God only can do that, Fanny Raynor. The pilgrim in the rugged way is *myself*; the heart, the figure within the serpent folds are *mine*, hideous emblems, wofully true."

I kissed Alice Warren's pale white brow, and then I got up gently from her side, and went to the table. The grim picture lay there. I snatched it up hastily, and, with trembling fingers, flung it upon the little fire which blazed on the hearth.

"You are dreaming, child. Did I not tell you that was only a type, a shadow? What use in burning it?"

And this was all Alice Warren said; for she laid her head down upon my shoulder, and cried again.

"It makes you more wretched, dear Miss Alice, to have such strange ugly things about you."

"But the *reality* is here," she replied, striking her hand upon her breast; "the burning reality is here, more fearful than the type. Oh, Fanny Raynor, if you knew all! If you knew the blackness of my woe, you would weep for me."

No revelations did Alice Warren make that evening, nothing further than dim, strange hints. Her words were wild, often broken with sobs; and I soothed her tenderly, whilst my own heart was more painfully perplexed than ever. The autumn moon shone in dimly through the shaded window, and the firelight threw a faint red glare upon us, as we crouched on the floor together.

The sound of Aunt Esther's cheerful voice,

as she stood at the gate talking to a neighbor, and the merry shouts of the village children at play, came up jarringly to my ears. I do not know what Alice Warren thought, but I marvelled. Joy and sorrow were walking side by side, but they saw not each other. To me, it seemed a mournful puzzle *how any* one could be happy that evening, whilst close to my side hung a stricken-hearted weeper. But then I knew nothing of life. I did not dream that *this* was but a *by-way* grief. I had yet to learn that many children of sorrow sit ever by the *way-side* weeping, whilst down the broad dusty road unheedingly hurry the sons and daughters of pleasure.

CHAPTER III.

At last, the long winter, with its snow-clouds and biting winds, passed away, and on the little village fell once more the warm golden light of summer.

"You see, Miss Warren, I took your advice, and put the crimson stars upon white ground; and very pretty it looks, too, I think;" and Aunt Esther held up her new quilt with a pleased air.

Miss Warren languidly pushed aside her book, and looked at the quilt.

"I am glad my suggestion pleased you, Mrs. Raynor, for it was done merely at random. I know scarcely anything about such matters."

But Aunt Esther would not believe this.

"I must call your taste into requisition again, Miss Warren. Now, what kind of a border would you advise, leaves or diamonds?"

I was sitting upon the broad old staircase, peeping through the balustrades into the hall; and just as Miss Alice and my aunt were talking, I saw Hannah coming up the porch-steps.

"No letters for you, Miss Fanny," she said, as I flew to meet her; "but here is one for the teacher."

But few letters ever came for Alice Warren, and those few she always tore open eagerly, tremblingly, even as one in dread of sad tidings. Yet this one she took calmly, and, breaking the seal, began to read as she stood there, with one hand carelessly grasping the quilt. But while Alice Warren read, an expression of the most bitter grief stole over her face, and, with a faint cry, she crumpled the letter in her hand, and rushed wildly from the hall. Aunt Esther picked up her quilt, and laid it on the settee; she looked puzzled.

"Really, Fanny, Miss Warren is a strange, startling sort of a creature. Poor thing, she has

a great deal of sorrow, I think; and, it may be, some new trouble has come upon her. I will see what is the matter."

But my aunt came back more perplexed than ever.

"Nothing ails Miss Warren; no friends sick or dead; no bad news of any kind, only she was a little nervous."

Aunt Esther wondered a little while over this matter, and then it dropped. I knocked at Alice Warren's room an hour or so later, to call her to tea. She opened the door slowly. Her eyes were swelled with weeping, and in her hand she yet held the letter.

"No, dear Fanny, no. I am sick to-night. I could not eat a mouthful; tell your aunt this;" and she turned away from me, and shut the door. So, I went down stairs with tearful eyes, and a heart full of pity for my young teacher. Some great grief hung over Alice Warren. What was it?

Miss Alice had just called up the last spelling class; the little ones had just come down from the primer bench, and were tying on their sun-bonnets. My books were gathered before me upon the desk, and I sat by the window, idly looking at the long evening shadows which were stretching upon the grass. But I heard a step upon the path, and a tall, graceful man passed the window. I saw his face but for a moment, yet I was struck with its marvellous beauty. I looked after the elegant stranger until I saw him cross the ford, and then the large trees hid him from my eyes.

"Oh, Fanny, come to Miss Warren!" And I sprang from my seat in terror. In the centre of the room, Miss Alice still stood; but the spelling-book had fallen from her hand; her face was deadly pale; her eyes widely opened; but she seemed not to see with them. I spoke to her; she gave me no answer. She gasped for breath, and we school children thought she was dying. I held Miss Warren's head upon my shoulder, and Jane Birch brought her cool water from the spring; and when we had bathed her face and hands, the color came back to her cheeks, and she smiled faintly.

"Don't look so frightened, children. I am better now. I was only a little sick. You can go home, all of you. Fanny, you may wait for me."

The school-children walked away, looking back upon Miss Alice half wonderingly, and whispering amongst themselves. In a few moments, we were alone.

"Get your bonnet quickly, Fanny," said Miss

Warren, drawing her veil down over her face ;
“ we will go home.”

We had a hurried walk down the narrow street, and a silent one, too, for my young teacher said not a word, and I was too busy with my own thoughts to speak. When I passed Miss Warren’s room a few minutes after, she called me in.

“ I know to know, Fanny,” she said, in a quick, husky tone, “ if you saw this evening a gentleman, a stranger, pass the school-room window ; you were sitting there.”

“ Yes, Miss Alice, I did.”

“ And did he look in ? Did he seem to see any one ?” she interrupted, eagerly.

“ I don’t think he did. His eyes had a sad, dreamy look ; he appeared to be thinking. No, Miss Alice, I am *sure* he did not see any one.”

“ Thank God ! Now, Fanny, you need not stay. I want to be alone ;” and the strange young creature waved me from her.

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There they lay upon the table, a great crimson heap of bright roses ; and I was very busy cutting the stems, and placing them in the old-fashioned china jars which stood upon the mantel. So busy was I, that I never heeded a quick step upon the porch, nor a low, musical voice which bade Carlo cease his barking. But a form darkened the parlor-door, and I looked up ; before me stood the graceful young man I had a little while before seen passing the school-house ; the mysterious stranger, whose presence had so fearfully moved Alice Warren.

“ I have frightened you, I see,” he said, springing forward, with ready grace, to pick up the roses which had fallen from my hand. “ Pardon me. My name is Gerald Ford. My visit is to Miss Warren ; she boards here, does she not ?”

“ Miss Alice is in her room, sir. I will tell her you wish to see her ;” and I went from the parlor, leaving Mr. Ford seated in the large chair, his hand pressed over his dark, dreamy eyes.

Not in her room was Miss Alice, neither was she in the house ; no one had seen her. So, I put on my bonnet, and went down the meadow, across the little stream, even through the thick wood, seeking my teacher, and finding her not. But, as I passed the tangled hazel-bushes, I heard a low sob, and, parting the boughs, I saw, crouching upon the grass, Alice Warren.

“ Will you not come home with me, Miss Alice ?” I said, springing to her side.

“ Go back, Fanny Raynor,” she cried ; “ go back. I choose to be alone.”

“ But a gentleman is at our house who wants so much to see you ; a Mr. Gerald Ford.”

My teacher shuddered, and then she threw her arms around me.

“ I knew your errand, and I hid from you. I implore you, Fanny, go back, and tell him I cannot come.”

I hesitated. I remembered Gerald Ford’s sweet, low voice and mournful eyes.

“ Dear Miss Alice, he looks so sad, and seems so anxious to see you.”

Alice Warren looked at me searchingly.

“ You pleading for Gerald Ford already ! Why, Fanny, has the charmer cast his net around you also ? Oh, save me from him ; save me !” And she wept bitterly.

Those gushing tears swept away all thoughts of Gerald Ford. I cared only for Miss Alice, and I sought to soothe her grief.

“ He shall not see you, dear Miss Alice. He shall not harm you ; but—oh, tell me, is he very wicked that you so hate and fear him ?”

“ Hate and fear *him* ! I hate and fear Gerald Ford ! Oh, Fanny, if I only could—but the serpent’s folds are tightened around me, and I love them ;” and a bitter smile played around Miss Warren’s mouth.

I looked at her in amazement as she flung herself down upon her knees ; and I listened to her wild prayer with a sort of terror—

“ Father in Heaven, give me grace and strength for this struggle ! I am calm now. I am going with you, Fanny. I *will* see Mr. Ford.” And Alice Warren quietly picked up her bonnet.

So, I followed her through the long meadow, and over the stream even as I came, hurriedly and in silence. Miss Warren swept back her rich raven hair carelessly from her tear-stained face, and then she walked into the parlor.

As she entered, Gerald Ford sprang to his feet, and I heard him exclaim : “ Oh, Alice, have I at last found you ?”

“ Gerald, *why* have you come ?” was Miss Warren’s only answer ; and then I heard no more, for the door closed heavily.

Aunt Esther took her work-basket, and went up-stairs. She wanted to be out of the way of the lovers, she said, and so did I ; so, I followed her to her room, and sat down beside the window. A great white flood of moonlight fell over the porch, and on the high evergreen bushes in the garden below ; the murmur of the stream which crossed the meadow, and ever and anon a melancholy hoot from an owl in the old cherry-tree, were the only sounds which broke the stillness. But as I sat there, Gerald Ford came from the hall, and crossed the porch. Alice Warren followed him to the step. I saw her black figure plainly in the moonlight.

"Gerald," she said, "tempt me no longer; be merciful, and leave me forever."

"Not forever, my Alice," was the sweet and mournful answer. "Your strange fanaticism shall not part us. Alice, I shall linger in the neighborhood for some days yet. Should you, in the mean while, return to reason, send for me; for—oh, surely your cruel resolution will be shivered; you *cannot* keep it."

"God give me grace to do so. Oh, Gerald, leave me, leave me."

I did not hear Gerald Ford's reply. He went out, closing the yard-gate quickly after him, and Alice Warren's sobs fell distinctly on my ear.

* * * * *

A weeper lay before the mercy-seat all that night, and the morning light heard her agonized prayer: "Oh, Saviour, help me to be strong."

CHAPTER IV.

For a day, Alice Warren would not leave her room; but when she came down stairs, she was calm and quiet as ever; no traces of a fearful struggle were upon her face; nothing but the same mournful smile which usually dwelt there.

That Miss Warren had some great trouble, Aunt Esther felt convinced. She pitied her deeply, and many a time wondered what *could* ail the young teacher; but this was all. Aunt Esther was no dreamer, and she never crowded her brain with idle fancies respecting Miss Warren. So, I lived alone in a world of doubts and perplexities, and Alice Warren was the mournful puzzle around which they all clustered. Gerald Ford left Chipdale immediately; but I knew, from the little I had heard from the window that moonlight evening, that he was yet in the neighborhood. But Alice Warren never spoke to me of him; she gave me her love, but not her confidence.

"She is in a terribly pining way, Miss Fanny. Why, she scarcely eats a mouthful, and her white face grows whiter every day, poor young creature. I am thinking she won't last long."

I turned from Hannah with an aching heart. I knew that Alice Warren was freshly nerving herself for some mighty struggle; that her little Bible was often wet with tears; that the cry of her heart was: "Father, give me strength;" but this was all I knew. I could only weep for my young teacher; and as I wept, I wondered.

One evening, I persuaded Miss Alice to leave her gloomy room, and sit with me for a while in the hall.

And the birds sung; the waters murmured;

from away down the green meadow came back pleasant sounds of children at play; and the little village looked joyous in the fair sunlight. But Miss Alice leaned back languidly in her chair, and her words were sad, and her smiles mournful. I laid my crimson brierberries in her lap, but I did not speak; and as I sat beside her, I wondered if there *could* live any person upon the earth sadder than Miss Alice.

The gate opened quickly, and upon the gravel-walk fell a manly step. Miss Warren sprang from her chair.

"I must go, Fanny," she gasped. "*He* has come, but I cannot see him;" and she turned to ascend the stairs.

"Stop, dear Miss Alice. I don't think it is any one you would not wish to see, only Mr. Whyte or"—

But whilst I spoke, and Alice Warren yet grasped the balustrade, a tall figure stood in the doorway. It was not Mr. Whyte; it was not Gerald Ford; it was no one whom I had ever seen, and I looked at the stranger in amazement. But Miss Warren, with a wild scream, half extended her arms towards him, tottered forward a few paces, and then would have fallen to the floor had not the young man caught her. I thought Miss Alice had fainted, but in a moment she spoke.

"So long looked for; so long prayed for. Oh, Herbert, have you come to me at last?" and she wept upon the stranger's shoulder.

"Dear Alice, sweet sister," he said, gently, "be calm. I am with you now; nothing shall ever again part us. Brush away those tears, love. Is this your welcome?"

But though the young man spoke playfully, I saw, as he sat down upon the settee with Miss Alice clinging to him, that he was deeply affected. I heard the stranger call Miss Alice sister. I saw, as they sat together side by side, that they were very like each other, yet I was startled when my teacher spoke.

"Fanny," she said, smiling through her tears, "this is my brother, my only brother, Herbert; we have been parted for years;" and with the same winning sweetness of his sister, Herbert Warren looked up and greeted me.

The evening waned, and the moonlight began to stream full into the hall; but the brother and sister yet sat there alone side by side upon the settee, talking to each other earnestly, and sometimes tearfully. When Herbert Warren went away that night, my Aunt Esther heartily pressed him to stay.

"Make my house your home, Mr. Warren," she said. "You have so long been parted from

your sister; surely, you will not think of staying anywhere else whilst in Chipdale."

Young Warren thanked my aunt, but declined. He was going to the village inn.

"But, I assure you, Mrs. Raynor," he added, "Alice and I will never again be parted; so, when I leave this place, you must make up your minds to give her up, for she goes with me."

Was my sweet, mournful Miss Alice then really going away? I was half sorry, after all, that Herbert Warren had come.

As my teacher passed me on the stairs, I stopped her.

"Oh, Miss Alice, I am so unhappy because"—and then the tears choked me.

Miss Alice set down her lamp, and kissed me.

"For shame, Fanny," said she, cheerfully; "are you sorry because a little sunshine is stealing over my path? I did think, dear child, that I would have lived and died here with you, but a change has come;" and as she paused at her room-door, she smiled brightly.

"But are you perfectly happy, Miss Alice?" I asked. "Has all your trouble gone?"

I regretted this question the moment after, for an expression of keen anguish passed over Miss Warren's face.

"Oh, Fanny," she moaned, touching her breast, "the *serpent* lieth here yet. I cannot find perfect happiness elsewhere than in my Father's kingdom;" and, with a sad good-night, she closed the door.

I awoke in a tremor, for I felt a hand upon my arm. Aunt Esther stood by me, and, in the dim light of the lamp she held, her face looked pale and troubled.

"Get up, Fanny," she said. "Miss Warren is very sick, and I have just come from her room."

I sprang from my bed, and hurried on my clothes; and very quickly I stood beside Alice Warren. She was raised upon pillows, and gasping for breath; her face was deadly pale, and upon the white counterpane and her night-dress were great splotches of blood. Herbert Warren knelt at the foot of the bed; his face was hidden in the clothes, and he seemed to be sobbing violently. The old doctor stood near Alice Warren, but his fingers were upon her slender wrist, so I spoke not to him, neither to Aunt Esther, for she was bending over the stricken-hearted brother; but when Hannah came into the room, I went softly to her.

"Tell me, Hannah, all about it."

"We none of us know much ourselves, Miss Fanny; but when my mistress got awake a few hours ago, she heard Miss Warren coughing

terribly for a good while, and then she heard her moan and kind of choke like. So, my mistress got up and came over; and what should she see, Miss Fanny, but poor Miss Warren all over blood? She had broken a blood-vessel, and could not speak. So, I ran for Doctor Gray, and brought Mr. Warren up from the tavern; and that is all. I don't know what the doctor thinks. I am afraid that he don't hope that the poor thing will see morning light;" and Hannah sat down to cry, for she loved the young teacher.

But "the silver cord was not yet to be loosed; the shadow went backward ten degrees, and the spoiler sheathed his sword for a season." Alice Warren saw the morning light, and as day after day passed away, she grew stronger, better. Herbert Warren watched his sister tenderly and faithfully. He was cheerful, for he was flushed with hope; but the old doctor shook his head.

"She will never be well, Fanny," he said, as I followed him out on the porch one evening to ask what he thought of Miss Warren. "She will never be well, and she can live but a year at the farthest."

* * * * *

And Gerald Ford came back to Chipdale. Apparently, Herbert Warren and he were old friends, for they often passed our house arm in arm, heads bowed down in earnest talk. Herbert Warren spent the greater portion of each day with his sister; and once, when he had lingered unusually long, Gerald Ford followed him to our house. I met Mr. Ford upon the step; he looked grave and anxious.

"Is Alice—Miss Warren worse this evening? Tell me, tell me," he asked, in a troubled tone.

"Oh, no, sir; she grows better, we hope."

"Dear, dear Alice," he murmured; and then, as though recollecting himself, stammered a hasty good-evening, and left the house.

CHAPTER V.

It was long before Miss Warren was strong enough to leave her bed, and sit up in her easy chair. At last, that time came. Herbert Warren, in the mean while, was anxious and impatient. He knew that Alice could not bear another winter in the north, and he was determined, ere the chill winds came, to take her to a warmer clime. So, he lingered in Chipdale, waiting only till his sister was able to leave it with him. And Gerald Ford came often to the village, and his walks with Herbert grew yet more earnest and protracted. The first wailing winds of autumn were beginning to sweep around the

house, and the crimson and yellow leaves glis-
tened brightly upon the trees. It was a sad,
beautiful evening. I sat with Miss Warren in
her room. The fire-light flashed up from the
little hearth, and as it shone upon her face so
pale, so lovely, the old wonder came back to my
mind. Was there ever *anybody sadder* than Miss
Warren?

"Fanny," said Miss Alice, suddenly, "has
Gerald Ford been here to-day?"

"Yes, Miss Alice, and he told Aunt Esther
he hoped the next time he came you would see
him."

"Poor Gerald! Yes, I will see him once
again. Oh, Fanny, I have been so weak, so
foolish! I have had such a struggle; but it is
over now."

Miss Warren motioned me to come close to her.

"Dear Fanny Raynor," she said, gently, "you
have often wondered, I know, why I was so
sorrowful and wretched, but I never felt before
as though I could tell you. I am going soon
away from you now, and I shall never return.
Don't cry, Fanny. You know, I will find in
the 'better land' what I have so long sought for,
perfect peace. But, before I have done with
earth, you shall hear my story."

Then Alice Warren told me of her early
home, so fair and beautiful; her kind, good
parents, whose tender love ever shielded Her-
bert and herself from care and sorrow. But the
"dark days" came; riches flew away; those
parents died, and Herbert and Alice were or-
phans, poor and lonely. Herbert Warren went
out to battle with the world. His home was in
a foreign land, but Alice often heard from him,
and his letters were cheering.

"Herbert did all he could for me, Fanny,"
said Miss Alice, "but I could not bear to be a
helpless burden upon him. So, I became a
teacher in——Seminary in the city. There, I
found a quiet home and kind friends. But I
was sad, so lonely I felt; Herbert so far from
me; no father or mother to bless me with their
love. Fanny, a light gleamed suddenly across
my way. I met Gerald Ford; he was noble,
generous; he loved me, and he laid his proud
heart before the poor orphan. I was sorrowful
and lonely no longer. I loved Gerald Ford with
a yearning tenderness, and my love was returned
fully, completely. I dreamed a lovely dream,
and I was happy. But the dreamer awoke, and
—oh, Fanny, what did I see! My sweet happi-
ness shivered to pieces—my goodly fruit 'apples
of Sodom.' Gerald Ford, my Gerald, was an
unbeliever, a hardened scoffer at holy things.
Long had he hidden this from me, but the veil

fell suddenly from my eyes. To Gerald, our
blessed religion was something loathsome and
contemptible; the precious Saviour I loved and
worshipped, he rejected and scorned. When
Gerald Ford found I knew all, he threw off his
disguise, and boldly, boastingly avowed his sen-
timents. I reproached him for deceiving me,
but he only laughed. Sweet were the ties which
had bound Gerald and myself together, but I
felt they must be broken. I loved him, but I
could not marry him. I could not give my hand
to the scoffing unbeliever; yet he was intensely
dear to me, and my heart cried out with a mighty
voice against the stern step. So, I had a great
struggle; then, Fanny, I told Gerald all. He
knelt to me; he upbraided; he implored; he
wept, yet all the while he held tightly to his
errors. Then we parted; but Gerald said to
me: 'Alice, I will never give you up. Your
foolish fanaticism shall not part us.' Oh, Fanny,
those terrible days! I shudder to think of them.
But my love was in no wise abated; it lived on,
mocking and reproaching me all the while. I
was strange and dreamy, and the spell which
Gerald Ford had cast upon me seemed like that
of a serpent. Fanny, you understand now my
grim emblems—types. Dear child, they were not
as fearful as the reality. I struggled against
Gerald Ford's power. I strove to crush down
my love for him. I fled from his presence. I
left the city and came to this place, but he knew
it not. If the blessed Deliverer had not upheld
me with his strong arm, surely I would have
fallen, but his 'grace was sufficient for me;' his
strength was made 'perfect in weakness.' With
what a torturing vividness came back the memory
of Gerald's love, so wide and generous; his
sweet, low voice; his mournful eyes. I could
not forget him. I knew a great gulf lay between
us, yet my heart pined for him. Duty was be-
fore me, and I dared not turn from it. Oh,
Fanny, when a *woman* thus battles for the right,
she may be strong, but it is always a terrible
strength, perfected through suffering. A letter
came suddenly from Gerald, reproachful, tender,
telling me he had found out at last where I was,
and would soon visit me; and then, he hoped,
my foolish resolution would be shaken. Fanny,
he came, and the same wild scenes were lived
over again. Gerald left me, but he threatened
to return. He knew I loved him, and he saw
his power; yet I have been graciously upheld.
Then came Herbert, my long parted brother,
prosperous and happy, still loving me very ten-
derly, and—you know the rest. Herbert is care-
less about religious matters, yet he looks upon
Gerald's sentiments with horror, and though his

friend, he never pleads with me for him. Now, Fanny, there is not so much mystery about me as, I know, you fancied, but I have had my own griefs heavy and dark."

Then Alice Warren wept, and I mingled my tears with hers.

Alice Warren's last evening with us; and a bright golden one it was. If it had not been for those fluttering crimson leaves, which ever and anon fell in the path, and the sighing winds which swept around the house, we could have dreamed it summer.

"Stay, Fanny, with me. No, no, you must not go;" and as Miss Alice tightly grasped my hand, the door opened, and Gerald Ford entered.

The young man's fine face was flushed and troubled, and when he looked upon Alice Warren, so pale, so fragile, leaning back upon the pillows in her chair, he seemed deeply affected.

"Oh, Alice!"—but the voice was husky, and the words died away; and Gerald Ford flung himself upon his knees before her.

"My poor Gerald," said Miss Alice, laying her little thin hand caressingly upon his bright hair, "do you know why I have sent for you this evening? I am going away, and we shall never meet again; but, before we part, I have many things to say to you."

Miss Alice was going on, but Gerald Ford, lifting up his head, poured forth words of the most exquisite tenderness and affection; and as he knelt there in the yellow sunlight, his face glowed with a touching, mournful beauty. Young as I was, I felt and acknowledged Gerald Ford's fascination, and I marvelled at Miss Alice's calmness.

"Dear Gerald, I have tenderly loved you. I do yet love you. I can safely confess it now; but it was not to speak of this that I have seen you this evening. When I lie down in my grave"—

"Don't tell me this, Alice," passionately interrupted young Ford. "You shall not die, you shall not."

"Peace, peace," said Miss Alice. "Gerald, I must soon die, but death has no terrors for me;" and then she went on to speak solemnly and beautifully of Heaven.

I well remember with what tearful earnestness she pleaded with the kneeler by her side to fling aside his wicked unbelief, and seek for mercy. But these words fell upon Gerald Ford's ears as an idle tale, and he answered them with careless indifference.

"Oh, Gerald, how can you speak so scoffingly? You grieve me deeply;" and Miss Alice sighed.

"Sweet fanatic, forgive me; but we will no longer talk of this. Alice, listen to me;" and Gerald spoke of love.

Very touching was his appeal, but Miss Alice heard him calmly. He told her how completely his hopes were centred on her; how she was, as it were, his own sweet life, and he implored her wildly not to fling him from her.

"You love me, I know; marry me then, and give me the right to be always with you, to watch over and guard you. Oh, Alice, I would lay down my life for you!"

"Gerald, I hoped this was all forever past; but I tell you now, and for the last time, that I can never marry you. I acknowledge my weakness. I love you even yet, but I may not trample upon duty; I cannot. I dare not give my hand to a scoffer, an unbeliever; and very soon I shall lie down and sleep in death. So farewell, Gerald, erring, yet beloved. Gerald, farewell forever."

But weeping, and uttering words of wild tenderness, Gerald Ford yet knelt by Miss Warren's side.

"My poor Gerald! Oh, Father in Heaven, have mercy on him!"

"Alice, Alice, don't mock me with your prayers. I scorn your fanaticism; 'tis it which is tearing you from me, and making us both miserable;" and Gerald Ford went on talking with fierce vehemence; and, frightened and trembling, I got up from my seat, and slipped from the room.

Gerald Ford left in a little while after. When he came down stairs, his face was swollen with weeping, and snatching up his hat, he pulled it over his eyes, and went out quickly; but I saw that in his hand he held Alice Warren's little Bible. That night Gerald Ford left Chipdale.

And when the gray, chill morning came, Alice Warren stood for the last time upon the porch. The carriage was at the door, and Herbert waited somewhat impatiently, but yet his sister lingered, and her farewells were tender, tearful. I loved Alice Warren, and when I looked upon her sweet pale face, I sorrowed most of all, inasmuch as I should see it no more on earth.

And it was a summer's day, and the green fields rejoiced in the pleasant light, but there I sat. Great tears fast, fast falling upon Herbert Warren's letter. Could I help it? My sweet Miss Alice was dead. But even as I wept, I was comforted, for I knew that, although her weary frame rested beneath the orange-trees of a foreign land, her spirit rejoiced in "the excellent glory" of her Father's kingdom. And the shining lock

of hair, and Alice Warren's miniature, which her brother sent me, so like her, with its dove-like eyes and mournful smile, lie by me, even now, precious relics of my beloved young teacher.

* * * * *

And years went by, and changes came ; and when my Aunt Esther died, I left Chipdale, and went far from it. And then I heard of Gerald Ford. Long had he wandered in the dark fields of unbelief ; but a hand of mercy led him from hence, and placed him in a better way, even the sure "path of peace."

And Gerald Ford sorrows not for Alice as one without hope. He knows that he is but "a pilgrim and a stranger" upon earth, and he awaits with patient faith the time when the Master shall come and call for him. Bitterly has Gerald Ford mourned his past life, but he wastes not his

time in idle regrets. He wages ever a vigorous war against the dark errors which had well nigh slain him. Alice Warren's death deeply touched her brother's careless heart ; and when, not long after, he laid down and slept beside her in that foreign land, it was said, by those who watched Herbert Warren in his last hours, that he had gone "to a better country, even an heavenly."

Perchance, it was well that Alice Warren was so early called home, for she was sorely tempted, and her strength was weak ; yet she sought help for her struggle wisely, even at the mercy-seat.

For the *lonely* woes of life, the *wayside* griefs, of which the world knoweth nothing, there is but one sweet balm, one sure comfort. Let the child of sorrow seek for this aright, and he will not be left comfortless. "Peace shall be ministered unto him abundantly."

CHARADES IN ACTION.

Answer to Charade in last number—REST-ORATION.

FOR the benefit of those who were not subscribers when the "Acting Charades" were commenced to be published, we republish the

INTRODUCTION.

This game is, as its name expresses it, a charade, acted instead of spoken. The two most celebrated performers of the party choose "their sides," and, whilst the one group enacts the charade, the other plays the part of audience. A word is then fixed upon by the *corps dramatique*; and "my first, my second, and my whole" is gone through as puzzlingly as possible in dumb show, each division making a separate and entire act. At the conclusion of the drama, the guessing begins on the part of the audience. If they are successful, they in turn perform; if not, they still remain as audience.

The great rule to be observed in Acting Charades is—silence. Nothing more than an exclamation is allowed. All the rest must be done in the purest pantomime.

If, in the working out of the plot, there should be some sentence that it is impossible to express in dumb-show, and yet must be made clear to the audience, then placards may be used. As Hamlet says, they must "speak by the card."

This license may also be taken advantage of in the scenic department. For instance, it would be utterly impossible for the audience to know that the drawing-room wall before them is meant to represent a "magnificent view on the Rhine," or "the wood of Ardennes by moonlight," unless some slight hint to that effect is dropped beforehand. In this case, it is better to follow the plan so much in vogue about Queen Elizabeth's time, and which, for simplicity and cheapness, has never been surpassed. At the commencement of each act, hang against the wall a placard stating the scene that ought to be represented.

The audience nowadays are no doubt quite as accommodating as in the sixteenth century. Then, the same curtain that had served for "Ye pavelyon of Kinge Richarde," could, in the waving of a placard, be changed into "Ye feildes of Bosworthe;" and there is no doubt but that, in these days, a fashionable drawing-

room assembly would believe anything you could tell them.

By this simple method, the most expensive scenery can be commanded at any time. The palaces can be golden without any additional cost, and lakes can be fairy-like at a moment's notice. There is also this advantage: as each spectator will be his own scene-painter, the views are sure of giving general satisfaction.

Another very important point with Acting Charades is the proper delivery of the gestures in the pantomimic readings of the parts. Every actor ought to study the different expressions and suitable actions of the passions. So much depends upon this that, under these circumstances, perhaps it would be better to draw up a kind of code of expressions, or laws for the better regulation of frowns, smiles, and gestures.

LOVE, one would think, is too well known to require many directions. The pressing of the left side of the waistcoat or the book-muslin, the tender look at the ceiling, and the gentle and elegant swinging of the body have, since the days of Vestris, always accompanied the declaration of a true devotion in the upright and dumb individual. The flame may perhaps be made a little more devouring by the kissing of a miniature, or the embracing of a well-oiled ringlet or figure-of-six curl.

RAGE, like a mean husband, can only be managed by fits and starts. It may be pictured to an almost maddening amount by the frequent stamping of the foot and the shaking of the fist. Frowning and grinding of teeth should be accompanied by opening the eyes to their greatest possible size; and, if a great effect is desired to be produced, the room may be paced, provided the legs of the performer are of a sufficient length to enable him to take the entire length of the apartment in three or four strides.

IN DESPAIR, the action is slightly altered; there, the limbs must almost seem to have lost their power. The actor must sink into a chair, pass his hand through his hair, with his five fingers spread open, like a bunch of carrots; or else, letting his arms fall down by his side, remain perfectly still, like a little boy on a frosty day, either gazing at his boots or the

ceiling. Despair is made more tragic by a slight laugh; but this must only be attempted by the very best tragedians, on the principle that laughter, like the measles, is very catching.

HOPE, like a sovereign sent by post, is seldom properly delivered. Here there must be no violent gestures—everything must be soft and pleasant. The finger must be occasionally raised to the ear, and the performer's countenance wear a bright smile and a look of deep intensity, as if listening to the soft still voice within. The ceiling may be looked at frequently, and the bosom pressed; but, if great care is not taken, and the hands are not frequently clasped at arms' length, the audience will be imagining you are in love—and in a state of love, of course, one is quite hopeless.

DISDAIN is perhaps the easiest passion to be expressed. The dignified waving of the hand, and the scornful look, gradually descending from top to toe, are well known to all who have been mistaken for waiters at evening parties. The eyes should be partly closed, the nose, if possible, turned up, the lips curved, and the countenance gently raised to the ceiling.

If any embracing should be required in the course of the piece, it is, under the present arbitrary laws of society and mothers, better to leave this interesting process to husbands and wives.

The effect, from the sheer novelty of the situation, will be startling. If they should refuse, the old theatrical plan should be resorted to—press heads over each other's shoulders, and look down each other's backs.

Many pieces conclude with a blessing. This is simply done by raising both the hands over the heads of the kneeling couple, looking steadily at the ceiling till the eyes begin to water, and moving the lips slowly, as if muttering. At the conclusion, the tear can be dashed away, and always has a very pretty effect. Weeping is generally performed by burying the face in the

handkerchief, bending the head to the breast, and nodding it violently.

The great difficulty to be overcome in Acting Charades is the absence of a theatrical wardrobe.

Very often it is necessary to dress as a Roman, a Persian, or a Turk. Sometimes an ancient knight is wanted in full armor. We have known Louis XIV. called for in a full court dress, and only five minutes allowed for the toilet. In all these trials, the mind must be exerted with high-pressure ingenuity. The most prominent characteristic of the costumer must be seized and represented. In the Roman, a sheet will do for a toga; in the knight, the coal-scuttle for helmet, and the dish-cover for breast-plate, make capital armor; and in Louis XIV., the ermine victorine wig for well-powdered peruke, and the dressing-gown for embroidered coat, would express pretty well the desired costume.

Great-coats, veils, whips, walking-sticks, aprons, caps, and gowns must be seized upon and used in the dressing up of the characters. No expense should be spared, and every sacrifice be made, even though the incidents of the piece should include the upsetting of a tray of tea-things, or the blacking of all the young ladies' faces.

ACT I.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DUKE OF WELLINGTON.	HIS CHARGER.
BRITISH ARMY.	NAPOLEON.
FRENCH ARMY.	SENTINEL.

SCENE 1—*The Plains of Waterloo. The British Camp.*

ALARUM of trumpets.

Enter the DUKE OF WELLINGTON at the head of the BRITISH ARMY. The Duke is mounted on his charger, and wears a blue cloak,



and a cocked hat made with the *Times*. The Army goes through its evolutions of presenting brooms, &c. The Duke addresses his men in a short pantomimic speech, and the troops, wav-

ing their hats in the air, swear to follow him to death.

Exit Duke of Wellington, his Charger, and the British Army.

SCENE 2—*The Plains of Waterloo. The French Camp.*

Alarum of drums.

Enter NAPOLEON, leading on the FRENCH ARMY. To show that he is Emperor, he either stands with his hands behind him, or else looks through a telescope of a sheet of music. He wears a cocked hat, and a cut-away coat, turned up with white paper facings. He has high

boots of japan table-cover rolled round his legs. He makes a short address to the Army, and they all kneel down to him and beg of him to believe in them. He is visibly affected, and takes snuff repeatedly. He blesses them, and they rise. Having placed a SENTINEL at the window curtain,

Exit Napoleon and the French Army.

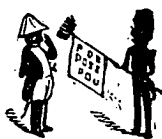


SCENE 3—*Night-time.*

The Sentinel is on duty pacing the room with shouldered broom.

Enter NAPOLEON, in deep thought. He walks up and down the room with his hands behind him.

The Sentinel perceives him, and presenting his arms, he challenges Napoleon. The Empe-



ror hesitates, when Sentinel draws from his pocket a placard, on which is written "*On ne passe pas.*"

Napoleon is delighted, and declares himself. The Sentinel kneels, and the Emperor gives him a "*croix d'honneur.*"

Enter FRENCH ARMY.



pay Landlord, and he is immediately surrounded by his Sweethearts, who begin coaxing him.

Enter JEWS, dressed in dressing-gowns, and long beards of tobacco gummed on their chins.



ACT II.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SAILOR. HIS SWEETHEARTS. COMPANIONS.
JEWS. LANDLORD.

SCENE—*Portsmouth. Outside of an Inn, with a placard of "The Jolly Tar," being a sign over the door.*

Enter SAILOR, with bundle on the end of the stick on his shoulder. He throws away his luggage and dances a hornpipe.

Enter his SWEETHEARTS (*music*), who take his arms, and dance round the room with him. At the end of the dance, Sweethearts declare their love for Sailor, who, untying his bundle, gives to one a shawl, to another a handkerchief, and to a third a necklace.

Enter LANDLORD, who bows respectfully to Sailor. He asks him what he would like to drink. The Sailor orders grog all round, which the Landlord immediately places on the table. The Sailor pulls from his pocket a heavy purse to

They gather round the Sailor, and commence flattering him. One offers him a watch, and another a coat, whilst the remainder exhibit bracelets and ear-rings for his Sweethearts.

The Sailor is captivated with the watch, and offers the Jew money for it, which is refused indignantly. The Sweethearts press him to purchase the ear-rings, and Sailor is overcome, and presents them with all the Jews have brought. He also takes the watch.

Exeunt Jews laughing and jingling their money.

Enter LANDLORD with his bill. The Sailor has no more money, and cannot pay him. The Landlord grows impatient, and demands the watch in payment. It is given to him.

Exit Sailor with his Sweethearts, and the Landlord laughing.



ACT III.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ENGLISH GENTLEMAN. HIS WIFE.
HIS FAMILY. PASSENGERS.
GENDARMES. HOTEL TOUTERS.

SCENE—*The Pier at Boulogne. A bell is heard ringing to announce the arrival of the Steamer.*

ENTER GENDARMES, who stand in a file with drawn walking-sticks, waiting for the Passengers.

Enter PASSENGERS with carpet-bags in their hands. Each one presents his Passport, and is allowed to proceed.



Enter HOTEL TOUTERS, who gather round

Passengers, and offer them their hotel card, beseeching their patronage.

Enter ENGLISH GENTLEMAN, HIS WIFE and HIS FAMILY, who are stopped by the Gendarmes.

English Gentleman is disgusted at such behavior, and in strong action inveighs against such a want of hospitality. The Hotel Touters gather round his wife, and with complimentary beseech her to patronize them. His Wife



overcome by their praises, and delivers to them the carpet-bags, cloaks, and umbrellas.

Exeunt Hotel Touters dancing.

The English Gentleman is unable to speak the French language, though he understands perfectly. The Gendarmes in vain endeavor to make him comprehend that they require his passport. They threaten to take him and his Wife and Children to prison, and he defies them to it. His Wife, in her alarm, delivers over to them several articles she had attempted to smuggle. The Gendarmes are not satisfied, and seize English Gentleman. His Wife and family weep.

Enter GENDARME with placard, on which written "*passport*." The English Gentleman clasps his hands, whilst his Wife, pointing after the Hotel Touters, declares that it is in his carpet-bag.

Exeunt English Gentleman, his Wife, and Family, in close custody of Gendarmes.



TABLEAU.

FLORENCE EMERSON; OR, THE YOUNG WIDOW.

BY VIRGINIA DE FORREST.

(See Plate.)

"FLORENCE!" cried Jessie Lawson, bursting into her cousin's boudoir, one morning—"Florence Emerson, Harry says you are engaged to George Langford!"

"Well, cousin, if I were, have you any objections?"

"Objections! Why, Floy, he is old enough"—
"Just thirty-nine, cousin Jessie."

"Thirty-nine! and a widower, with two children! But it is a mistake of Harry's; you are not really going to marry him, are you?"

"I expect so," said Florence, quietly.

"Well, I give you up. You, Florence Emerson, the belle of the season, with a large fortune; you, the beauty and heiress, with lovers, beaux, offers without end or number, to throw yourself away upon a poor widower with two children, and no fortune except in his profession. Oh! Floy, I thought you had more sense. What are you thinking of?"

"Why, Jessie, you are wasting your eloquence. George Langford is handsome!"

"Granted."

"Talented!"

"Granted, again."

"He loves me!"

"So do fifty others."

"And, last of all, my strongest argument, I love him!"

"Well, I suppose you will marry him in spite of my disapproval, so I wish you joy, and hope he'll never hold up Mrs. Langford first as a pattern to Mrs. Langford second."

"If Mrs. Langford first was a model for me, I will follow in her footsteps."

"Well, well, there's one comfort. Willie and Edith are very pretty children, and too young to rebel at a new mamma, I believe. How old are they exactly, Floy?"

"Willie is four, Edith three."

"Keep you busy, the care of two such babies."

Florence Emerson and Jessie Lawson were cousins, and had, until Jessie's marriage, been almost like sisters. Jessie, who was two years the elder, was a gay, lively blonde, vain, and pretty. Florence was a tall, stately beauty, with large dark eyes, black hair, and features like a

Greek statue. She was an orphan, and, as Jessie said, an heiress.

George Langford was a lawyer of some standing. Handsome, talented, but grave and quiet in his manners; devotedly attached to Florence, but he was thirty-nine, and a widower! Jessie's sentiments were echoed by all Florence's circle of friends when her engagement was known. She, so beautiful, young, talented, and wealthy! She always was different from other girls, they said. So, after a few days, the matter ceased to be discussed, and some new wonder of the fashionable world took its place.

Florence had been married just two years, when it became necessary for Mr. Langford to go to Paris; his stay was to be very short, so he concluded not to take Florence. She was fond of home, had won the love of both children, and in return loved them fondly, and with their society, her home duties, and a promised visit to Jessie, thought the time of her husband's absence might be made to pass pleasantly. But when the hour of departure came, when his trunk stood waiting in the hall, and he came to say farewell, the whole aspect of things seemed changed. Florence felt that her dearest treasure was leaving her; all looked dark, and a vague presentiment of evil filled her soul.

"Why, Florence, you are white as a corpse," cried George, in a frightened tone. "I thought you had arranged gayeties without number to occupy you while your grave old husband was away. Cheer up, Floy; I shall be gone only a short time."

"Oh, George, I did not realize it till now. What can I do without you?"

"You will visit Jessie, take Willie and Edith into the country, and—and—oh, you had a whole list of pleasures arranged. The carriage is here. Good-by, Florence."

Florence tried to speak, but the words died on her lips. She grasped his hand, while her eyes filled with tears, and then let him go.

All her pleasures were forgotten as she watched the carriage rolling from the door, and she only remembered how lonely she would be without him; she looked back upon two years of such

perfect happiness that it seemed less like reality than a pleasant dream. Long she stood at the window watching, as if she expected him to return, but the voices of the children roused her, and she stifled her own grief, and went to amuse and comfort them. Willie thought papa was "real unkind" not to take them; while Edith clung close to Florence, and hoped papa would be safe on the "deep water."

Jessie Lawson and Florence Langford were seated in the piazza of the pleasant country-house they had hired for the season, conversing. Edith and Willie were romping with Rover on the grass, while ever and anon their clear, joyous laughter would make the ladies turn and smile.

"I forgive you now, Floy, for marrying George," said Jessie, fondly. "I think that, if he had asked me, and I could have looked into the future, I should have done just as you did."

At that instant, Jessie felt a hand laid on her shoulder, and, looking up, saw her husband; his face was very grave, and his whole manner betokened that something serious had troubled him.

"Jessie," he said, in a low tone, "come into the parlor; I want to speak with you."

"He is jealous," whispered Jessie to Florence, as she rose to obey. "Now for a matrimonial lecture!"

"Close the door, Jessie," said Henry, when they entered the parlor. "I do not wish Florence to hear what I have to say now. Poor Floy! we must break it gently to her!"

"Why, Harry, what is the matter? George?"—

"Yes. 'The Eagle,' the vessel he sailed in, was wrecked, and but few escaped; a vessel going to Calcutta took a few of the passengers, but the rest were lost. George Langford's name is among the missing!"

Harry had forgotten the open window, and was startled to see Florence now standing in front of it. She was cold and pale as marble, her hands were tightly clenched, her teeth set, and her whole frame rigid and motionless. Harry sprang to her side, and took her hand to lead her in. The touch broke her stupor, and, with a slight shudder, she fell fainting to the ground.

For weeks, Florence Langford lay between life and death; fever and delirium succeeded her death-like trance, and her life was despaired of. A strong constitution, however, triumphed, and she recovered; but oh, how altered! The pale, thin face, seen now under a close widow's cap, was so wan and sad that few would have recognized the once blooming Florence.

Her sole comfort, now, seemed to lie in the children, *his* children. She would hardly allow

them out of her sight, and her whole time was spent in instructing and amusing them.

Florence Langford had been a widow just one year. It was a bright summer's day, and she sat in the same little parlor where she had first heard of her husband's loss. Willie and Edith were seated on the floor beside her, blowing soap-bubbles. Florence sat watching their innocent delight as the sun shone on the pretty globes, and reflected prismatic colors in them, and then her thoughts flew back over the last three years. Sadder and sadder grew the pale face, until Willie noticed it, and, leaving his play, went softly to her side; Edith knelt beside him, with her face laid caressingly against Florence's hand.

"Tell us about papa," whispered Willie.

"When is papa coming back?" asked Edith. "He stays so long."

"Hush, Edith," said Willie. "Papa can never come back; he is dead."

But Edith shook her head. She had always maintained that, as papa went away in a carriage, and said he would come back, and bring them pretty toys from Paris, he could not be dead.

Florence drew Edith upon her lap, and, throwing her arm round Willie, the three talked about papa for an hour; how much longer they would have remained in that position I cannot tell. Jessie interrupted them; her whole face was beaming with joy.

"Floy!" she whispered, kneeling on the stool at her cousin's feet, and untying her cap, "take this off for a minute."

"Why, Jessie?" asked Florence, suffering her to remove it.

"Because it is stiff and unbecoming," said Jessie, who was loosening Floy's hair, and twisting it over her fingers into its old curls. "You must never wear it again."

"Dear Jessie, give it back to me. I shall always wear it."

"But I say you shall never put it on again. Dear Florence, a widow's cap is needless now!"

"Jessie," cried Florence, starting up, and looking eagerly into her cousin's face, while she trembled violently, "what do you mean?"

"Can you bear the best of news, Floy?" said Jessie, softly. "George!"—

Jessie in answer threw open the door, and said, gayly: "Come in!" and, in another moment, Florence was in her husband's arms, and the two children were looking in a kind of joyful astonishment at their father.

All was soon explained. George Langford had been among the passengers taken to Calcutta,

and had, from some mistake of the reporters, been put in the list of missing. Cold and exposure had brought on an attack of brain fever, and he had been very ill. As soon as he was able, he had started for home, but the voyage

had taken several months ; and, after reaching England, he was detained some days before starting for America. He was there at last, and a happier party never met than the one that evening at Oak Lodge, Mr. Lawson's country-seat.

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"I'SE GOT NO MAMMY NOW."

A WEST INDIAN SKETCH.

BY MRS. M. A. DENISON.

"I'se got no mammy now! Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I'se got no mammy now!"

The child sat rocking herself by the roadside. Sunshine lay all around her; beauty waved in the tall palms; music flooded the air with melody; fragrant flowers gave off their stores of wealth; but neither light, bloom, nor beauty was there in her soul. Her richly dark locks stood out in elfish disorder; her scant, tattered frock was gathered up to her face, and wet with tears.

"What is she saying? What is the matter, little one?" asked a soft, low voice; and a gentlewoman, richly but plainly attired, stopped before the child, whose glistening eyes were raised in wonder for a moment; then, as the tears rolled forth, she rocked the little body again, wofully sobbing: "I'se got no mammy now!"

"She mother die las' night," lightly said a young African girl, pointing over her shoulder towards a low hut, from which issued a confused murmur. "She berry sick dis long while with kinsumption. Come, Idy, girl, git up an' go wid me; git some dinner. chile," she added, turning to the mourner; but she shook her head only, sobbing and weeping more violently than before.

Another moment, and the lady stood within the Creole's hut. It was miserably furnished; and on a mat in one corner lay the body of little Ida's "mammy." Two old negroesses were bustling about. They bowed low at the stranger's approach, and ceased from their work.

"The child seems to mourn very much for one so young," said the lady, turning from the still beautiful corpse.

"She strange chile any way," said one of the old women, whose hair, crisp and wiry, was bleached to almost snowy whiteness. "She wid she mother night and day; nothing part 'em any way. Oh, she *too* strange!"

"Her mother was kind to her, then."

"Oh, she love she very much, too! When she little pickarin, she take she everywhar—to market, to meetin'; and when she git so poor as to have to carry do basket on she head, sell wegetables and so, she take the little chile wid her evervwhar."

"I suppose the woman's husband is dead."

"She husband never was living, I 'spect," answered the negress, naively; "least, I never knew if she married—mebby, though. Massa Jennings clerk de chile's father. He nice, *nice* young man, werry handsome; an' ebber since he gone to he country in England, she pine away, and there be the end of she."

During this conversation, the little girl had crept silently in, and now crouched down at the side of her dead mother. She did not weep, but looked utterly heart-broken. In pity, the lady gazed on her, and well she might. So slight a figure! so fragile a frame! The little hands, like birds' claws; the large, beautiful eyes, preternaturally lustrous; the small English mouth, grieving, and a bright crimson burning in her thin, dark cheeks; the child was an object of sympathy.

The neglected Creole was laid at rest in the grave, and the little girl transferred to the home and heart of the kind English lady. Then might be seen in that stately house, where hitherto the footstep of infancy had been an almost unknown sound, a beautiful child, in snowy robes, listlessly moving about the balcony, or striving, in her little way, to show her gratitude by feebly playing with the costly toys which the hand of love bestowed upon her.

For a time, it seemed as if the disease with which her mother died was working its way silently through that fragile frame to the vitals. And the child's grief seemed to lend it wings, for often would she start up in the night, with that sorrowful wail: "Oh, I'se got no mammy now!" Nor could the sweet words and caresses of her foster mother beguile her of her sorrow; she would spread her wan fingers over her face, and, as if wholly desolate and hopeless, rock herself to and fro.

Months passed, and to loving eyes there was a world of improvement visible in the unfortunate little stranger. The childish form grew round and full; the great bright eyes glared less wildly, and there came, instead of the violent crimson, the softly subdued tint of the early spring roses.

"Yes, my little Ida is surely getting well,"

said Mrs. Clermont one pleasant morning. "The darling, how she has grown to my heart! I never thought to love a human being as I love her. How beautiful! how beautiful she is!" she still soliloquized, as the now happy child gave her an arch look over her shoulder, and then, with a merry laugh, continued her play.

It would indeed have been difficult to recognize in the fairy-like being, chasing the sunbeams, the squalid little figure once bowing in rags and dirt by the side of the old hovel. A robe of spotless white hung, swaying and shining, over her faultless figure. The dimpled arms were bare to the shoulder, and fastened with knots of glossy ribbon. The dark thick hair hung in curls even to the pretty shoulders, and the tiny feet were encased in soft kid boots, that patterned over the thick carpet with the light footfall of a fairy.

One day, a tall and very handsome man inquired of the servant whether Madame Clermont was within, and being answered that she was away, making calls, eagerly asked: "Is there a child here they call *Ida*?"

The servant replied that there was, that Miss *Ida* was at that moment asleep on the sofa in the parlor.

"Show me the way to her then!" exclaimed the stranger, with much agitation. "She is my little girl. I am the child's father!"

With extreme reluctance—for, to the girl's imagination, he had come to take their darling from her home on the instant—she led the way to the richly furnished room; and, on the stranger's declaration that he should stay till Madame Clermont returned, she left the apartment. The gentleman, first pressing his hand hard upon his brow, moved softly to where a fine white lace was thrown carelessly over the face and form of little *Ida*. She was sleeping sweetly, one little hand under the rich curls; a bright color mingling with the almost white complexion; the little lips rosy red, parted in a smile, and the long silky lashes, so like her mother's, sweeping the rounded cheek.

"My daughter—my little daughter," murmured the stranger, sinking upon his knees, with clasped hands, while tears filled his dark eyes. "My dear deserted little one, beautiful as a dream. Oh, why have I not cherished you? Why have I left you for strange hearts to love, while none love me? O God, thou art just!" he added, raising his tearful eyes. "She who would have given her life for me—nay, has given it for the man who left her to cold charity—sleeps the sleep of death, and my own child knows me not."

He bent over and kissed her; the motion

made her restless. He softly removed the lace covering, and kissed her tenderly again. The child opened her eyes; seeing a stranger, her first impulse was to scream with fright.

"You don't know me, my poor little *Ida*," said the gentleman, almost with a sob, as he succeeded in gaining her attention. "I am your papa, from England. Poor thing! How should she know one she has never seen?" he added, as *Ida* still looked wonderingly at him.

"Are you the papa my mamma talked about so much?" Then, as childish thought travelled back to the day of her bereavement, she cried, while tears gathered and rapidly fell: "Oh, I ain't got any mammy now!"

With trembling lips, Henry Grant took the child on his knee, and pressed her to his bosom, and for a moment wept with all a man's anguish.

Startled at the sight that awaited her, Mrs. Clermont stood transfixed at the entrance of the parlor as she returned. But all was soon explained, and a pang, such as she had never felt before, rent her heart at the thought that little *Ida* might be taken from her.

"Shall you carry her back home with you?" she asked, tremblingly, as Henry Grant began his preparations for returning.

"Do you think I would go without her?" was the reply. "Why, she has become dear to me as the apple of my eye."

"But"—commenced Mrs. Clermont, eagerly; then sinking back, she was silent.

"I know all you would say," replied the father of little *Ida*, and for a moment a look of gloom passed over his fine features. "Perhaps my wife will not receive her, or, if she does, the little creature, so beautiful, so simple-hearted, may be subjected to insults and contumely on account of her birth." He sighed heavily as he continued: "My little English children are very far from possessing the loveliness of my little West Indian; that, too, may create dislike and dissension."

"Promise me"—cried Mrs. Clermont, eagerly, "promise me that, if such annoyances grow unbearable, you will bring her back to me. She has become the light of this lonely home. At times, it almost breaks my heart to think of parting with her;" and, overcome by her emotion, she burst into tears.

"I do promise you that she shall come back if dislike degenerates into insult. I do promise you, for I know that she will be to you as a cherished child."

And so they parted, little *Ida* weeping for the loss of her second mamma.

There was, as usually happened every day, a decided quarrel in Lady Grant's nursery. Frank was arrayed against Mitty, and little Ida sat apart, a shadow chasing the sunny smiles from her beautiful face.

"Hush, Franky," whispered Ida. "Mamma will hear you," she whispered, timidly.

"It ar'n't any of your business, Miss Creole!" cried Master Frank, in his shrillest voice. "Besides, our mamma ain't yours; she only belongs to us, and you know you're a darkey, for mamma said you was."

All the child's nature was in rebellion at this taunt. A look of passion, that was almost fury, crossed her brow; the blood grew crimson in her cheeks; her eyes flashed; it seemed almost impossible for one so gentle and beautiful to be transformed so completely. Springing from her seat, she stamped her foot, but the choking words would not come; then, flying rather than running towards the frightened boy, she attempted to clutch him with all her little strength, but the coward gave her one blow that felled her senseless to the floor. The child screamed once; an eager footstep sounded on the stairs, and Henry Grant rushed in the nursery, to find poor Ida bleeding, and apparently dead.

Casting an angry glance towards the two cowering children, he raised the senseless form with a groan, and hastened out of the room.

• • • • •
"Where is your father, children?" inquired Lady Grant, as they took their accustomed places at the table.

They looked at each other, and then Mitty said: "He's gone somewhere with Ida."

"Ida," muttered the lady, "always Ida. I do believe he cares nothing about his wife and children; that little black thing takes up all his time and attention. I wish she was"—the sentence died away on her lips.

"And just because she fell down, and hurt her a little, he took her up in his arms," said Frank, "and went away with her. I don't like her, mamma; she's just like a little wild Indian."

As the wicked boy uttered these words, Henry Grant entered. He saw the storm gathering upon the brow of his wife, and while she was exclaiming: "That little pest, I suppose"—he interrupted her with: "That little pest will trouble you no longer. I shall return with her to her native home, where human hearts *love*, nor take pleasure in trampling down the innocent and defenceless. Frank," he continued, turning to his son, "do not think you will escape punishment for the blow that came near murdering Ida."

"Oh, papa!" cried Frank, "I never"—

"Silence!" said his father, sternly; and Lady Grant, who knew her husband's strong will, dared not interfere.

And Ida, overjoyed, was taken back to her olden home. She had been in England three years, and her beauty increased with time. How warmly she was there received, I need not say, nor how Mrs. Clermont strained her to her bosom, and called her now "her own, *own* child, never to leave her again."

But I will tell how it came to pass that Henry Grant bought an estate in the West Indies; how every year he saw this child improve, under the loving care of her foster mother, till she was almost a miracle of loveliness and virtue. And I will tell that once upon a time, a good and gifted Englishman, great by birth, but greater by intellect, visited that home of perpetual beauty with Henry Grant, when Ida was just seventeen, became acquainted, enamored with, and finally married the gentle girl; then taking her to London, she straightway became the theme of all tongues; "a wonder of perfection," they said she was, so accomplished, so beautiful; and though there was little love on the part of her brother, and sister, and lady mother when they met, still, in virtue of her position, they were obliged not only to recognize, but to bow before this "splendid creature," whom all London deified.

LAST HOURS OF A SINGLE GENTLEMAN.

[THE following may have been read by many of our subscribers; but we think it is so excellent a parody that we are willing to give it a place in our "Book," and so preserve it.]

This morning, November 11th, at half past 11 o'clock precisely, an unfortunate young man, Mr. Edward Pinckney, underwent the extreme penalty of infatuation, by expiating his attachment to Mary Ann Gale in front of the altar railings of St. Mary's Church, Islington.

It will be in the recollection of all these friends of the party who were at Jones's, at Brixton, two years ago, that Mr. Pinckney was there and then first introduced to Miss Gale, to whom he instantly began to direct particular attention,

dancing with her no less than six sets that evening, and handing her things at supper in the most devoted manner. From that period commenced the intimacy between them which terminated in this morning's catastrophe.

Poor Pinckney had barely attained his twenty-eighth year; but there is no belief that, but for reasons of a pecuniary nature, his single life would have come to an untimely end. A change for the better, however, having occurred in his circumstances, the young lady's friends were induced to sanction his addresses, and thus became accessories to the course which he has just suffered.

The unhappy young man passed the last night

of his bachelor existence in his solitary chamber. From half-past eight to ten, he was engaged in writing letters. Shortly after, his younger brother, Henry, knocked at the door, when the doomed youth told him to come in. On being asked when he meant to go to bed, he replied: "Not yet." The question was then put to him how he thought he would sleep, to which he answered: "I don't know." He then expressed his desire for a cigar and a glass of lemonade. His brother, who partook of the like refreshments, now demanded if he would take anything more that night. He said: "Nothing," in a firm voice. His affectionate brother then rose to take his leave, when the devoted one considerably advised him to take care of himself.

Precisely at a quarter of a minute to seven the next morning, the victim of Cupid having been called, according to his desire, he arose and promptly dressed himself. He had the self-control to shave himself without the slightest injury, for not even a scratch upon his chin appeared after the operation. It would seem that he devoted a longer time than usual at his toilet.

The wretched man was attired in a light blue dress-coat, with frosted buttons, a white vest, and nankeen trousers, with patent boots. He wore around his neck a variegated satin scarf, which partly concealed the Corrazzo of the bosom. In front of the scarf was inserted a breastpin of conspicuous dimensions.

Having descended the staircase with a quick step, he entered the apartment where his brother, and sister, and a few friends awaited him. He then shook hands cordially with all present, and on being asked how he slept, answered: "Very well!" And to the further demand as to the state of his mind, he said that he "felt happy." One of the party hereupon suggested that it would be as well to take something before the melancholy ceremony was gone through; he exclaimed, with some emphasis: "Decidedly." Breakfast was accordingly served, when he ate a French roll, a large round toast, two sausages, and drank three great breakfast cups of tea. In reply to an expression of astonishment on the part of a person present, he declared that he had never felt happier in his life.

Having inquired the time, and ascertained that it was ten minutes of eleven, he remarked that it would soon be over. His brother then inquired if he could do anything for him, when he said he would like a glass of ale. Having drank this, he appeared to be satisfied.

The fatal moment now approaching, he devoted the remaining portion of his time to dis-

tribute those little articles he would no longer want. To one, he gave his cigar-case, to another his tobacco-stopper, and charged his brother Henry with his latch-key, with instructions to deliver it after all was over, with due solemnity, to the landlady. The clock at length struck eleven, and, at the same moment, he was informed that a cab was at the door. He merely said: "I am ready," and allowed himself to be conducted to the vehicle, into which he got with his brother, his friends following on behind the others.

Arriving at the tragical spot, a short, but anxious delay of some moments took place, after which they were joined by the lady with her friends. Little was said on either side; but Miss Gale, with customary decorum, shed tears. Pinckney endeavored to preserve decorum, but a slight twitching in his mouth and eyebrows proclaimed his inward agitation.

All necessary preliminaries having now been settled, and the prescribed necessary formalities gone through, the usual question was put—

"Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wife?"

"I will."

He then put the fatal ring on Miss Gale's finger, the hymeneal noose was adjusted, and the poor fellow was launched into—matrimony!

MIRIAM JENKINSON.

BY J. B. HEYER.

HOME is such a delightful place! When you have just returned after a long absence, you are treated with as much tenderness as if you were just born, and served with as many comforts as if you were in a decline. Then it looks so sunny within; everything as comfortable as feather-beds and cushioned rocking-chairs, and as neat and polished as clean windows. In my case, there was a fragrance of green tea, and crisp biscuits, and spice-cakes permeating the atmosphere, which thrilled my heart and awakened my sensibilities and poetical feelings more than the scent of sweetbrier and violets.

Then the dear faces glowing with affection to see me, and such an amount of rosy mouths as I was obliged to kiss, until I felt like a great awkward bumblebee in a rose-bush. And the little ones were as glad to see me as if I had come down the chimney, instead of entering by the door. And when I produced a two-penny trumpet, and blew a blast, such a shout went up to heaven that I imagined I was the Angel Gabriel, about to address a concourse of people. Indeed, I stood there like a Christmas tree, with gifts for all my friends and relations; and I was asked as many questions as if I were a round deal-table, instead of a fond son and brother, though I believe I answered them rather more correctly. Then the girls remarked how wonderfully I had improved, and secretly admired me, until I became as vain of my whole person as I had been of my patent-leather boots. And the way I humbugged those innocent beings was worthy of a Moses or a Barnum, giving glorious accounts of my uncle and my uncle's establishment. How famously I had lived, as free as a ghost, going hither and thither, as reckless of consequences as an enemy's bombshell, until my mother gently reproved me, and my eldest sister gave me a crisp little piece of advice. The truth was, I had been pinched and slaved, cribbed, cabined, and confined by my tyrannical old Uncle Seth.

"I declare, Ebenezer, you are in love with some pretty girl!" exclaimed my sister; for, in pulling out rolls of oranges and packages of candies from my pockets, out slipped a lock of the poet's favorite colored hair, golden hued. I blushed, but did not deny the charge, they

were such a benevolent sympathizing set. And truly I was in love, yet not with the owner of the ringlet, but Miriam Jenkinson, their next door neighbor. However, I did not confess this to those sweet little inquisitive creatures, nor how my uncle had put a dreary stop to my first love by forcibly pulling me back in the very act of falling headforemost, he very wisely suspecting the truth from the extreme polish of my boots, neatness and elegance of my habiliments, want of appetite, and general languor.

"And such quantities of oil as he uses!" said my aunt; "it is as bad as boarding a fresh Esquimaux, or a young poet." For I had acquired a habit of sitting up late at night, composing sonnets, and looking at the moon. But what brought matters to a crisis was the discovery of that same shining tress of hair in my possession.

My uncle, after applying various offensive adjectives, exclaimed: "How do you expect to get along without a grain of sense, a spark of energy, or a copper in your pocket?"

"Indeed," I said, "I could live, and Hannah too, and be content with little."

"And so could I; but it must be on the barrel of meal and cruise of oil system. You must have the comfortable assurance that 'your little' will never dwindle down to nothing from much using. In fact, you must have 'your little' kept undiminished, not by a live prophet, but by a respectable fortune; and where is that to come from? for not a penny do you, or any of your abominable kith or kin, get from me if you take this foolish step." And my uncle abused me as roundly as if I was his wife instead of his nephew.

Why did I not resent it? Not because I was a meek man, nor because I repeated a prayer, as some worthy personage has recommended as a cooling process in one's fits of passion, but because I thought of my uncle's money-bags, and of the mystical hints he had thrown out of making me his heir, which proved as efficacious in controlling a rising gust of anger (as difficult to put down as a hurricane) as if I had mumbled the whole morning service through.

Love, like a cold, gets well of itself, par-

ticularly first love. But scarcely a year had passed by when I met an old acquaintance, a lovely little lady from New Canaan, who came to spend a season in the city. All the young men adored Miriam Jenkinson, and I among the number paid her my devoirs; and indeed it was for the express purpose of gazing once more upon her heavenly countenance that I had returned home, and not to gladden the hearts of my affectionate mother and sister, as they very naturally supposed.

What was my dismay, then, after the delicious tea referred to—not before, thank Heaven!—I received the melancholy intelligence that Miriam was about to be married.

“Don’t you remember the pretty child you used to call your wife, and little beauty?” inquired my tender sister Susy, unconsciously pulling at my heart-strings.

“And I always prophesied that you two would make a match, you were such affectionate children,” added my mother in a doleful tone, causing my heart to cease beating, and turning black in the face; I was forced to rise and totter to the window for a mouthful of fresh air.

There is no use in battling with despair. If you are in the monster’s mouth, you had better give up at once and slide down easily, and perchance you will come out whole, like Jonah. Which means, let grief have its own way, and you will feel much better after you have dropped out all your tears, and gone through all your lamentations. Then you are in a fit state to philosophize, and to make resolutions—a strengthening process. Even if you don’t follow them out, you have a thorough conviction that you will. It is not what the man performs and has performed, but that which he believes he can and will do, that sets him up in his own estimation. Therefore, I determined not to play the stoic, although it is not difficult to one who has lost all hope; for hope, more than weakness, prevents one from controlling one’s desires. Accordingly, I gave full sway to my despair, and spent the night in performing those gymnastics that result from extreme anguish; so that, when I met Miriam in the morning, who said, in her graceful way, that she “was so delighted I had happened home just on the eve of her wedding,” I was too thoroughly exhausted and sleepy to turn black and blue in the face, or fall down in convulsions.

Like all lovers, I fancied every one was cognizant of the little secret locked in my heart. I thought my mother’s maternal anxiety for my fatigued appearance was odious, prying curiosity. My sister Susan possessed an unusually

tender expression, which aggravated me beyond endurance, for my morbid imagination construed every attentive and inattentive glance into one of sympathy. Pity, on such occasions, always appears to me like cold victuals bestowed in a mingled spirit of contempt and compassion. But I need not have experienced any fear, as all my friends supposed me to be enamored of that bright tressed damsel whose hair was always tumbling out of my *porte-monnaie*. Alas! poor girl, I cared no more for her then than for cold slap-jack. Lovers are the most suspicious of mortals, excepting bank robbers or murderers; so no wonder that I resolved to attend the wedding, and I did so with an air of indifference like a number of other glassy-eyed, pallid-checked, leaden-hearted individuals, for Miriam was a famous coquette, and I was not the only indignant disappointed personage invited to the bridal.

It was rather an anxious assemblage; the bridegroom was detained by some untoward accident, and long and patiently we waited his coming. At length, when everybody’s enthusiasm was escaping in yawns, and expectation was worn down to weariness, a messenger arrived with the discouraging news that no bridegroom was coming.

It appears that Miriam had answered yes, and such a tender, tremulous yes, you would think that never but one such had passed her lips, to a couple of gallant cavaliers, resolving to marry the lucky individual who appeared first on the carpet. The truth was both possessed heart-breaking qualities, and Miriam loved them equally. Somehow her plans came to light, and the two gentlemen, instead of fighting a duel, concluded to leave the fair lady forever.

I could not endure to see Miriam’s troubled countenance while polite people were laughing in their sleeves, and rude people were laughing quite audibly in their handkerchiefs. Everybody had tears in their eyes, and so had I; but mine were not produced by superhuman efforts to suppress an unlimited number of ha! ha! like the old gentleman’s at my side, but they resulted from grief and indignation. I at length determined to frustrate the two old maids whispering scandal, who thus kept up a scornful hissing like a couple of Medusas, and to crush again the aspiring hopes of those same dejected lovers, whose eyes suddenly brightened up all at once like so many gas-lights.

I was a resolute man, and when I made up my mind to do, a thing I did it, although it is better to meditate upon and doubt the feasibility of your plans until you lose your enthusiasm:

then, if they still appear *à la* Solomon, go forward and put them into execution. I was not of that order of mortals, but of an order who are always leaping, unmindful of golden rules, and consequently falling into crocodiles' mouths and mud-puddles, and coming out *à la* Balaam's quadruped, while one's safe friends are dying with laughter on the other side. I always kept my friends laughing continually, not because of my wit, but from my want of judgment. I stepped up to Miriam. No one ever regretted a step as I afterwards regretted those five steps. I said: "Miriam, you know that I have always loved you; will you not accept me as your bridegroom?" The old gentleman was then obliged to exert the same superhuman efforts to suppress exclamations like "Halloo! Bless my eyes!"

"We shall yet have the pleasure of witnessing a bridal," said my sister Susan, delighted to find her eldest brother so gallant.

You say you were never refused. Well, then, I know you will be interested enough to feel with me in imagining how I felt.

When you complain, never utter your woes to people who have suffered under the same ills and perplexities; it will only set them to thinking what they have undergone of the same nature; and, instead of finding a sympathizing listener, you will discover to your dismay that you have been rooting up another Job, who will make you twice as miserable by a relation of his particular griefs.

I kindly overlooked the pity and consoling remarks of my mother and sisters; and it is something to be kind when one is in despair.

I returned to the city, and found that some fun-loving piece of inhumanity had inserted the whole affair in the papers. There was my own name staring me out of countenance; and my uncle exclaimed: "It is just like you. Your father would have acted the same under like circumstances, and your grandfather also, great-grandfather, and your great-great-grandfather; in fact, the whole senseless donkey race."

"It is disgraceful!" chimed in my Aunt Sally, who was always ready to trample on me when my uncle knocked me down.

"It was a mistake," I cried.

"People of sense never make a mistake," rejoined my uncle. "It was a want of judgment, and when a man is deficient in judgment, even though he have the enterprise, energy, and independence of a digging full of gold-diggers, he will fail to succeed."

I have no doubt you imagine that, after this foolhardy exploit, I settled down into a dreary

old bachelor. You are mistaken! I was of a sanguine disposition, a cheerful temper, which, like good sunshiny weather, people rarely appreciate. To be sure, every one remarks upon it; but who blesses his stars and considers it a piece of good fortune when he comes across a cheerful man, or awakes in the morning, refreshed by the sight of a glorious sunlight day? Very few, and exceptions are not taken into consideration by good philosophers. I was one of your contented mortals; my hopes had nine lives; my equanimity was as likely to be upset as the planetary system. My spirits were as bright and genial, even under misfortune, as if my whole being were constantly exhilarated by a mint-julep.

Five years had elapsed, when I resolved to bless the old folks once more with my presence. When I arrived at home, and, pushing through the little wicket, went straight in the back door, such a solemn silence reigned in the house that I concluded they had all gone blackberrying, or that some one was high unto death. So I went softly up stairs into the little parlor, when, lo and behold! there was half of our village assembled, with their hair on end, seated around a table, stirring up the dead. Miriam was among the number, and it was at her suggestion that I consented to take a seat in the circle of the enlightened company. I had forgiven Miriam her former harshness, long ago; for I never bear malice towards a woman unless she is as ugly as sin is in Milton's description, and at that moment I forgave myself also for again thinking Miriam an angel.

Once more I had the exceeding folly to make a proposal, at the same time reminding her that even her peculiar views relating to spiritualism could not alter in the least my fond enduring affection for her.

Miriam rejected me, and, although not in the most gracious manner, I was not so terribly disheartened as some others would have been; as, I said before, the keenest disappointments were no more than a pin's scratch to my sensibilities. I was not one of your grumbling misanthropic mortals, who are always putting their friends in hot water as if they were a parcel of lobsters. Even under this last repulse, I went about a cheerful man for three years.

Then, for the fourth time, I met Miriam, and a third time I fell madly in love. What better can a young man do than love and hope? Miriam was now what they term an old maid; still she possessed none of the acid attributes of an old maid. Even more beautiful than in her youth, if it was once sweet sixteen and bloom-

her eighteen with her, it was now a superb thirty.

I believe I have never described Miriam. The truth is, my poor description could no more represent Miriam's beauty to your imagination than a wood-cut. I could not think of her as old; then how could I style her so in our criticizing little home-circle? To be sure, all the old spinsters claimed her as one of their sisterhood; and my sweet sister Susy, always tender with regard to the other sex, yet malevolent towards her own, represented Miriam as the oldest, sourest, most disagreeable of old maids.

It was a delightful day in June, when Miriam and I sat, in the deepening twilight, by a clear rippling stream. I gazed upon her lustrous hair, her brilliant eyes and teeth, white and delicate, with adoring admiration, while she gayly chatted and smiled; when suddenly, as she was indulging in a silver trill of natural laughter, something fell from her mouth into the stream. Miriam shrieked in agonizing tones; and, as she bent over the brook in a vain search, a trio of glossy curls left her head and went floating down the stream. I dived and handed Miriam her teeth and hair, and when she had firmly adjusted them, she thanked me kindly with a sweet smile and mantling blush.

"Now is the lucky moment," thought I, for my faithful love was not weakened by the phenomenon of teeth falling from the rosy mouth of a blooming young lady. But Miriam said: "No, indeed," when I offered her a devoted heart. "Why cannot you let me alone, you foolish fellow?" she said, with a musical laugh, taking the precaution to ascertain if the teeth were safe before making the accompaniment to the scornful words.

I am one of the disagreeables, I thought; one of those unfortunate individuals who are the peculiar aversion of people in general, particularly delicate, nervous young ladies; one of those who, on leaving the room, are immediately assailed with maledictions.

"Ain't he disagreeable?" exclaims one fair creature.

"Horrid!" rejoins the very sweet reserved one whom you imagined casting timid glances of affection towards you.

But I was mistaken. I did not comprehend the philosophy of such things: that, though you may be rejected with the utmost scorn by one lovely being, another, equally beautiful, will be going into a decline solely on your account.

My good mother had often manœuvred to incline me to place my scorned affections on a pretty little neighbor. I had remained out in

her company whole evenings, with the stars and the full moon, yet my heart was not in the least affected. My fancy could only be moved by the magnificent. If love is to be measured by the breadth and height of a blush, then was Martha over head and ears in love with me. But blushes are nothing, said I to myself, thinking of Miriam. People blush quite as often from gratified vanity. And then the frequent swoons that Martha had fallen into from excess of joy on hearing of my safe return home, and on my recovery from a long illness; all this I regarded as idle gossip. And although I did remark Martha's pallid, wan little countenance, because I had been obliged by my mother, as a duteous and affectionate son, to notice her blooming cheeks, bright eyes, and glossy hair, how did I know but that she had been devouring pickles and imbibing vinegar, like my sisters, to get rid of her over-rosiness?

Martha was so silent that you could get nothing out of her but musical monosyllables, and so bashful you could hardly make out whether it was a negative or an affirmative she murmured so tremulously. Still her heart was full of gentle thoughts, and hallowed memories, and hopes as calm and beautiful as faith.

Perhaps I had become interested in Martha; any way, I resolved to test her affections; I was not afraid, like some of your spoonneys; besides, I was used to it. So one day, as Martha sat sewing, and meditating so profoundly that she failed to observe my approach—for sewing is a reverie to the other sex as fishing is to ours—I took a seat beside her, and said something to her in so low a tone that she could not have heard it; therefore I will not insert it here. Martha flushed up into such a gush of joyful surprise that I feared she would break a bloodvessel, and murmured, while her eyes sparkled like dew-drops in the sunshine—

"I have always loved you, Ebenezer." And she would have died of shame at the boldness of her confession, had I not immediately confessed the same.

The evening before my marriage I sat quite solitary in our back parlor, musing upon all the strange events that had come to pass. So, I am to be married in the same church where I once made such a confounded fool of myself; and to Martha Gray! that dear little nobody! At this period I was quite an old bachelor, with gray hairs in my head, and a quaver in my voice; yet Martha had set her heart on me, gray hairs, quaver, rust, and all.

At length, I was aroused from my reflections by a gentle tap at my door, and before I could

rise to admit my visitor, a lady stepped in, with a very wrinkled, vinegar aspect.

"You do not recognize me," she said, in a tremulous tone verging on tears.

So I recollected, with all my might, all my old maid acquaintances, and they were numerous, for old maids think they have a right to rich old bachelors, but in vain; I remembered not one so completely dried up, so totally devoid of all youth, beauty, and beneficence.

"How strange that you have forgotten Miriam Jenkinson!" exclaimed the lady, in melancholy tones. And then Miriam proceeded to business; she declared, weeping, that she had "loved me long."

I do not wonder that young ladies blush so when asked the all-important question. I never was so much embarrassed in my life. I had to make an effort like a dying man, before I could utter a word. At last I contrived to say, "It is too late," and, more to the purpose, in rather scornful tones. This was a great shock to Miriam's pride; and, as she did not long remain in the land of the living after this occurrence, I sometimes think I broke her heart at last. Certainly I had no wish to take so signal a revenge for her cruel behavior towards me. Nevertheless, it is true, as my uncle said: "Withhold your wrath; never mind revenge; your enemy will come some time, and help himself to it."

MISS TIBBS'S TRIALS.

BY MARY OAKLY.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT a pleasant thing it is to be a confidential friend; to feel assured that, however dull and uninteresting you may appear to ordinary observers, there is at least one individual who appreciates you—one to whom you are always welcome, and whose joys and sorrows are confided to your sympathizing bosom! I once enjoyed this enviable position in the regards of Miss Tibbs, a charming young lady on the shady side of forty. Miss Tibbs had, if her own word might have been taken on such a subject, been quite a belle, or, as she remarked: "Though I say it myself, I was a tolerably pretty girl."

Notwithstanding, there were many uncharitable persons who very much doubted the fact, for, as Miss Tibbs's pretensions to girlhood had long since disappeared, so had all traces of her beauty. A form which in youth might have been slender, had, when fully developed, assumed almost a matronly appearance. The rosy cheeks had long since faded, leaving a complexion pale and slightly sallow. A high, smooth forehead, with gray eyes, gave rather an intellectual cast to her features; but a prominent Roman nose, sharp and thin, with the tightly drawn lips, did not add to the effect.

Winfield is a small village, but, like many places of the kind, supports and circulates a deal of scandal—and fearful and wonderful were the revelations of Miss Tibbs, given under the most fervent adjurations to secrecy. She was a music-teacher, that is, the youthful and ambitious portion of the community visited her daily to receive the stereotyped half hour's instruction; and in my case the practice of scales, and explanations of whole notes, quarter notes, and grace notes were often accompanied, or rather interrupted by her comments on past, present, and probable future events.

She had no admirer at the time, though, as she averred, she had never been in the like circumstances since she left off short frocks.

"I hope, my dear," she would observe, "you may never have the trouble that I have had. Many and many are the nights I have spent in crying, it always distressed me so much to refuse an offer; and then to be begged and entreated

to pity a person; it is really heart-rending to one who possesses such tender feelings as I do. There was an English gentleman; I never saw a handsomer man, he had such beautiful eyes, and such a pleasing manner; he seemed in despair when I rejected him, and declared he never could survive it. He went to England immediately, and on his brother's death, came into a title and estate; so, if I had married him, I might now have been Lady Somebody instead of a music-teacher. Then there was Mr. Barnett; I declare I was really persecuted by him; it was absolutely the cause of my coming here; but I don't think I gained much by the exchange; there is very little society here, and I do not like the place."

"Oh, Mary!" cried Miss Tibbs one evening, as I drew off my gloves and seated myself at the piano, "I have something to tell you; but go on with your practice, dear; let me hear your last polka, and then turn over to your exercises. Well," she resumed after fifteen minutes of vigorous strumming on my part, and industrious netting on her own had elapsed, "who do you think was at Mrs. Hamilton's last evening? Her brother, Mr. Morton; I never met him before; but he is a most gentlemanly person, very handsome, though quite an old bachelor. Mrs. Hamilton says he is quite confirmed in his way, for he was once disappointed, and says he will never again risk himself in an affair of the kind. He certainly has a strange way of carrying out his resolution," she continued, musingly. "He says he has found the society here so attractive that he intends remaining all summer."

"When did he arrive?" inquired I.

"Only yesterday," she replied. "But now, Mary, I know I can trust you, so don't mention anything that I have said. You know what a scandalous place this is."

Miss Tibbs relapsed into silence, and I went on with my lesson.

"Stop, Mary, that's wrong; now commence again, and be sure and count these, one, two, three—one, two, three; go on, you are getting on nicely. I believe you don't know Mrs. Hamilton," she continued; "a very engaging person indeed. I like her better the more I see her. She insists on my spending a few days with her during their vacation. Such dear little

children, too! I'm so fond of them, little darlings! I wish they were old enough to take lessons, I should take so much pleasure in teaching them."

"May I come an hour later than usual tomorrow, Miss Tibbs?" said I, as I rose from the piano. "Mamma is going away, and I do not think I can leave home so early."

"Just as you please, my dear, but come as early as possible, as I am going out in the evening."

"Indeed?" and I looked inquiringly.

"Yes, Mrs. Hamilton made me promise to come and sit an hour or two with her; she is not very well, you know."

"Take care," I replied, shaking my parasol at her; "I shall think Mr. Morton is the attraction."

"How can you insinuate such a thing?" and she laughed.

A low cultivated giggle had Miss Tibbs, the sole remains of her youthful days, when she captivated gay young men, and astonished timid ones by her dashing manner and reckless flirtations.

Several weeks glided by without any unusual occurrence. Mr. Morton still remained in the village, and Miss Tibbs's affection for Mrs. Hamilton seemed to increase. At first, a weekly visit was all that she accomplished; but, as matters progressed, and she laid more vigorous siege to the obdurate heart of Mr. Morton, she gradually increased in her devotion to his sister, until three evenings at least out of every six were spent in her company.

"What a tease you are, Mary!" she exclaimed, as I rallied her one day. "I declare, I will never tell you anything again, you are such an unmerciful creature. I was giving a certain person a description of some of my pupils the other evening. I told him that one was very amiable, another very sarcastic, another quiet and self-possessed, and the last a perfect rattle-brain. Now, which character will you take?"

"Oh, I don't know! I do not think any of them would suit me. Which did Mr. Mortimer prefer?"

"Oh, he does not like them. He said persons who appeared very amiable did not always prove so, and sarcastic young ladies he disliked; he did not fancy a human icicle, and an everlasting talker was his abomination."

"He was very complimentary. What does he like?" said I, looking in her face.

"Oh, you quiz!" she said, laughing; and, pretending to feel very much confused, she hurried across the room for her handkerchief.

"Who is that?" said I, suddenly stopping in the midst of a waltz, as a gentleman passed the gauze-curtained window, and Miss Tibbs started up to gaze after him.

"Don't you know?" she replied, as I vainly endeavored to get a glimpse. "That's William—Mr. Morton, I mean."

"Oh, dear! Have matters progressed that far?" said I, laughing. "I had no idea of it. I suppose he calls you Sarah, does he? I shall positively begin to inquire for white ribbons and gloves."

"Nonsense!" she rejoined, highly pleased. "We are not yet engaged; but I certainly think he is the most interesting person I ever knew, so refined and gentlemanly in his manners, and so considerate, if he is not well—he has had a cold lately; he is so particular in asking his brother-in-law to walk home with me, and will insist on my wrapping myself up and being careful. He never says anything with regard to his intentions, but you know, Mary, one can tell by looks and actions whether a person is sincere or not. Now that you have seen Mrs. Hamilton, how do you like her? Is she not pleasing and ladylike? Mr. Morton seems very fond of her. You're not going yet, surely. I did not think it was so late. Wait a moment, and I will walk up the street with you."

It was getting dusk, and the lamps were lit in the shops as we passed. Just as we turned the corner, in a blaze of light from the Emporium, we almost met two gentlemen, who paused, stepped back, and entered a small office beside it.

"Who is that?" whispered I.

"I do not know," replied my friend. "But wait a moment for me, Mary. I must run into Mrs. Hughs's. You don't know her, and if you will just stand here for a minute, nothing will harm you." And she was gone.

I was left standing just beside the open window of the office, which was dimly lighted. There were voices within, and I could not avoid hearing every word.

"You are a pretty gentleman to run from a lady, if that was she," said one voice.

"Oh, I'm certain it was!" replied another. "Don't I know the step? Good faith, I have reason to. I've kept pace with it often enough. I tell you that woman fairly persecutes me. I avoid her whenever I can. I told sister to-day, if she ever came there again, and I had to go home with her, I'd lead her through a mud-hole, and so I certainly shall. I came here for a little peace and quiet, but that old tabby won't let me have either."

"Poor fellow!" laughed his friend.

I was shocked. The gate opened just then, and Miss Tibbs came out. Should I tell her or not? I reflected. It seemed so dreadful that she should be so deceived; but no, I could not; she was so cheerful, and chatted so gayly; besides, there were no names mentioned, and I was not certain that it was she they meant, and so we parted. I walked home in silence, thinking of the deceitfulness of the world. It never occurred to me that Miss Tibbs might be mistaken herself. I thought Mr. Morton must be amusing himself at her expense, and consequently felt very indignant.

CHAPTER II.

Mrs. HAMILTON was very kind, and I soon went, at her invitation, to spend the evening with her. Miss Tibbs was there in all her glory; her hair was arranged in the most becoming style, and she wore a bewitching little cap of black lace (she did wear caps; in fact, threads of silver were beginning to mingle with her raven locks). The children came round their delighted friend, and when I next looked at her, she was seated near the object of her adoration, with little Arthur by her, who was amusing them by his prattle.

"Are you my aunt?" said he, looking up in her face. "I think you are. Mamma said you might be some time. Wouldn't you like it?"

"Don't you love me as well as if I was your aunt?" said Miss Tibbs, with a coquettish side-glance at Mr. Morton, who sat quietly looking on.

"Love you? Yes," replied the little fellow. "Don't you, uncle?"

"Of course," he rejoined; and the animated lady set down Arthur, and crossed the room with a triumphant expression.

"Miss Oakly," said the gentleman, suddenly starting up, "will you favor us with some music?"

"I do not play," said I, half frightened, for he was such a large, dignified-looking person, and his eyes seemed to look through me.

"Perhaps Miss Tibbs will oblige us," observed Mr. Hamilton.

But Miss Tibbs was in an ill humor on account of not being first requested to play, and refused. At length, after much persuasion, she allowed Mr. Morton to open the piano, and seated herself.

"What shall it be?" said she, turning over the leaves, and casting a smiling glance on him.

"Anything you like, Miss Tibbs. Your taste cannot err."

"Oh, you flatter me!" she replied, simpering. "But, seriously, what do you fancy?"

"Can't you give us a song?"

He was leaning over her, and his face was perfectly malicious as he spoke.

Poor Miss Tibbs! Her voice was one of the unfortunate kind that have a *break* in them, which they never can get comfortably over. There was no medium; it was either high or low. Unfortunately, she was not aware of this, and fancied singing was her peculiar fascination. I was in an agony. I could not think it possible that she would attempt it, and the real regard I had for her—for she certainly was kind hearted when she was not devoted to anything else—made me fear the more.

"Try that sweet thing you sang the other evening," he continued.

"Oh, that is so difficult, you know!" and Miss Tibbs smiled, as if to enhance the value of her performance.

My state of nervous trepidation was not diminished by seeing Mr. Morton, as the song went on, place himself more directly behind the performer, while he drew out his handkerchief, and exchanged looks of delighted intelligence with his brother-in-law. At the close, however, he was profuse in his compliments, and Miss Tibbs was evidently in the seventh heaven of delight. She declined singing again; the exertion was too much for her, and commenced a rattling polka.

"Oh, that's capital!" cried Mr. Morton. "Won't you polk with me, Miss Oakly?"

I declined in astonishment. In fact, I began to dislike him. I thought he was probably quizzing me as well as my friend.

"Now do oblige me," he continued. "I'm so fond of it, and it is seldom one hears such music as that."

But I still refused, when Mrs. Hamilton interposed.

"Do go, my dear," said she. "William is very gay sometimes, and you have been sitting all the evening."

Almost without knowing what I did, I stood up with him.

"Now, Miss Tibbs," said he, "give us your best polka."

With a sudden glance of withering scorn on me, she began again with a tremendous bang that seemed to make the poor piano tremble, and away we went.

"Don't you find it very easy to polk to Miss Tibbs' playing?" remarked my partner, as we in vain tried to keep time to the discordant measure.

"Very," I rejoined, entering more into the spirit of the amusement.

Suddenly the music ceased, and the fair performer rose and hurried into the adjoining apartment. My heart reproached me, for I caught a glimpse of the tears that were swelling in her eyes.

"Oh, Mr. Morton!" I cried, "I fear we have offended Miss Tibbs."

"Impossible, Miss Oakly. What have we done to annoy her?"

She soon returned, and Mr. Morton, who still seemed in high spirits, made a constrained effort at conversation with her, which she received with wounded dignity.

CHAPTER III.

I ALMOST dreaded meeting her after that evening, and went to my lessons with the air of a condemned culprit. She appeared very melancholy, complained of not feeling well, and talked despondingly of ones nourishing serpents in their bosoms, of false friends, and the perfidy of the world generally. I regretted it very much, though, after all, I was not to blame. It was several days before the impression wore off, not indeed till the renewed attentions, or rather her attentions to Mr. Morton, effaced the suspicion.

"What audacity!" exclaimed Miss Tibbs, entering, and throwing herself on the lounge, while she untied her bonnet, and threw off her shawl. "To think of his having the impertinence!"

"Who, Miss Tibbs?"

"Why, Tom Dexter. You know him, don't you? I have a slight acquaintance with him; but then, he's a mere boy. The idea of *his* following me up to Mrs. Hamilton's! I was perfectly thunderstruck when he entered; and he had so much cool impudence, just as if he only intended calling on her, and talked and played with the children in the most unconcerned manner possible. Why, my dear, such assurance is insufferable."

"Are you sure he followed you there?" said I, highly amused at her indignation. "He goes there occasionally, does he not?"

"Of course, he did! Oh, I know! I'm sure it was on Mr. Morton's account. He thought, of course, as he should come away when I did, he would attend me home, but I bade Mrs. Hamilton good-night in her own room, and slipped out without their knowing it."

How the object of her indignation laughed when he heard of her remarks, as he soon did, for in Winfield one heard everything.

"The suspicious old maid!" said he. "She thinks of nothing but getting married, and fancies every one is like herself. She try to captivate William Morton! He wouldn't marry her if she was made of gold. He makes more fun of her than I do, and that's needless."

And so "Time ambled withal," Miss Tibbs's spirits being like a barometer, sometimes up and sometimes down, just as Mr. Morton was attentive or not. Her confidential communications rather increased than diminished.

"You are my only friend, Mary," she would sometimes say. "I could not exist without you. Mrs. Hamilton is a *dear* friend, too; but, you know, I cannot feel as free with her under existing circumstances;" and she laughed meaningly. "But oh, my dear child, never have an admirer if you can avoid it; it causes so many painful feelings, especially if the gentleman is reserved. Now, Mr. Morton is. If he were a younger person, we should call him positively bashful. He has allowed several opportunities for proposing to pass by, though I could see what was in his mind. Dear, dear, I'm sure I've done all I could to encourage him, as far as was consistent with propriety. You may believe me, Mary, that, though I have had so many offers, I never was before in *love*;" and Miss Tibbs covered her blushing face with her hand, and laughed with a pretty affectation of girlish embarrassment.

The tide of her confessions was interrupted by the entrance of a young lady to take her lesson.

"Don't go yet, Mary," said she, as I arose. "Now go on, Miss Briggs."

I do not know of a more embarrassing situation than that of a new performer just sitting down to take a lesson on the piano with other persons around her on whom she feels she is intruding, and who are perhaps watching her awkwardness. This Miss Briggs evidently felt, for she trembled excessively, and seemed so confused, that I really pitied her; and to relieve her as much as possible, I sat down by the window, and became absorbed in a book. An exclamation from the teacher roused me.

"Stop! Go over that again. Hold your wrist up; don't spread your hand out in that manner. Now go on."

The young lady attempted it again.

"Nonsense!" cried Miss Tibbs, with a strong emphasis on the last syllable. "Don't you see you've made a mistake in the bass? Strike octaves—these—so."

Five minutes elapsed.

"What stupidity!" she exclaimed. "I de-

clare, I've no patience with you; you get worse and worse. Here you are half a bar too fast in the treble. No, don't attempt it again; it's perfectly ridiculous, you know, your going on in this kind of way;" and Miss Tibbs's eyes flashed in anger upon the unfortunate girl, who had never been a favorite, and now had come in a very unlucky time, as she disturbed the delightful outpourings of that lady.

"It's no use your trying to take a lesson today; you don't try, so get up!" she cried to the sobbing pupil, who sat motionless by the instrument. "Get up! Do you hear? Don't sit whimpering there," she continued, closing the piano with a crash, throwing down a pile of music, and overturning a chair in the movement.

"Miss Tibbs," said a gentleman's voice.

We both started. Mr. Morton held the door in his hand.

"I beg your pardon, ladies," he said, bowing, and casting a slight glance on the drooping form of Miss Briggs, who was endeavoring to stifle her sobs in a corner. "I rapped at the door, but you were too much engaged to hear me;" and his eyes were lit by a quizzical smile that scarcely reached his lips.

"Oh, Mr. Morton!" said Miss Tibbs, in her most honeyed accents, recovering from the confusion his sudden entrance had thrown her into, "pray come in. You can go home," she said aside to Miss Briggs, who took her bonnet and disappeared through another door.

"No, thank you, Miss Tibbs," he replied. "Mrs. Hamilton wished me to call; her love to you, and she would like to know if you can come up to-morrow evening."

"Give my love to Mrs. Hamilton, and tell her I shall be most happy to do so; but do come in."

"Thank you, I have a person waiting for me," said he, bowing himself out.

I did not speak. Miss Tibbs threw herself on the lounge, and burst into a passion of tears; and, respecting her grief, I silently withdrew.

CHAPTER IV.

THE sudden illness of a sister compelled me to leave the village for several weeks, during which I received but two letters from home, and my friend was not mentioned in either; but, notwithstanding, she was often in my thoughts, for, though passionate and ill-tempered, she had generally been kind to me, and one cannot help feeling interested in an affair of which they

know so much; consequently, I fear it was as much curiosity as a more generous sentiment that prompted me to call soon after my return. She received me very affectionately, and appeared to be in excellent spirits. After various subjects had been discussed, I ventured to allude to Mr. Morton, by inquiring if he was still in the village.

"I really do not know, my dear," she replied, with cool indifference. "Probably Mrs. Hamilton will inform you."

I saw immediately that a change had "come o'er the spirit of her dream," and did not again allude to him.

On my way home, I met a young friend.

"Oh, Mary!" she cried, "I'm so delighted to see you. When did you arrive, and where have you been just now?"

"Only calling on Miss Tibbs," I rejoined; "but she seems very much changed."

"Oh, yes!" she replied, laughing. "Her adored Mr. Morton has gone away."

"When did he leave?"

"Oh, soon after you did! And what was worse, without making a proposal. He was right if he did not wish her to accept him, for I believe, if he had only hinted at such a thing, she would have married him in spite of himself."

"Poor Miss Tibbs!" said I.

"I don't think she is to be pitied," replied my merciless companion. "She might control her temper. They say he called on her one day, and found her in a perfect fury, and just boxing the ears of one of her young ladies. I'm sure I don't know anything about it. Thank Heaven, I never had a musical mania, and so I have escaped her clutches; but I should like to know who it was. I heard the other day that it was Miss Briggs, and I shouldn't be surprised if it was, for she has not taken a lesson in a long time, and Mrs. Briggs told me if Fanny couldn't get her lessons without being abused, she should go without them."

"But how is it," interrupted I, "that Miss Tibbs is in such excellent spirits if Mr. Morton has deserted her?"

"Oh, she has got another beau, Tom Dexter! You know him."

"Impossible!"

"No, not impossible, though very improbable, I must confess! She positively must be more than twenty years older than he is; but still, it is an actual fact, he spends half his time there, and people say they are engaged, but I don't believe it; he certainly cannot be silly enough to marry her."

My friend turned into a store and left me, and

I pursued my way, lost in astonishment at the new change in affairs.

"You have been getting new music, Miss Tibbs," said I, as she executed a piece for me in a very animated style. "You did not get it in the village, did you?"

"Oh, no!" she replied. "Mr. Dexter brought it for me."

"Indeed! He must possess good musical taste if he selected it himself."

"Yes, he is quite a critic, and has a very correct ear. Did you ever hear him sing?"

"I never had the pleasure; but does he really sing well?"

"Oh, very well, indeed! I'm sure it would please you. Come in to-morrow evening, and hear him, for I rather think he intends calling;" and again the same simpering smile that had once greeted a reference to Mr. Morton returned.

Curiosity induced me to accept the invitation, and the scene I beheld perfectly satisfied me. They seemed so wrapped in each other that I had plenty of leisure to observe them.

"Can it be possible?" thought I, as I watched him hanging over her, turning the leaves of the music, and bestowing a thousand attentions in the most assiduous and devoted manner. "Can it be possible that he has serious intentions, or that she has so soon forgotten Mr. Morton? After this, I shall never again put faith in any one's protestations."

She appeared so completely changed. Her dear friend, Mrs. Hamilton, was now scarcely mentioned, and she seemed to have suddenly discovered that the seclusion of her own room was preferable to running the risk of taking cold by spending her evenings with her. In proportion as the matter assumed a serious aspect, her confessions diminished, or rather, I suppose, she was too happy in the reality to waste her time in imaginations.

The music-lessons were still continued, but were often hurried over with a very preoccupied air; in short, it was evident that love's young dream was drawing to a conclusion in her heart. Sentiment and needlework had become strangely intermixed, and I often surprised her engaged in a very mysterious manner over various articles of attire that generally disappeared on my entrance; and one evening, when returning for something I had forgotten, on opening the door, as we usually did, without rapping, I surprised the lady and her devoted admirer in a very affectionate conversation, with her head in a most alarming proximity to his shoulder. Of course, I begged pardon and scampered away; but after that, when the probability of a wed-

ding was discussed, I could not help looking wise, and hinting that I knew more about it than I chose to reveal.

At length, the last act of the tragedy occurred. One morning she sent me a note, requesting me to come over, as she wished to see me particularly. I found her greatly agitated, and in all the bustle and preparation of packing up for a journey. With much embarrassment, and a shower of tears, she informed me that she had at last yielded to the earnest solicitations of Mr. Dexter, and was that morning about to bestow her hand where her heart had long since taken refuge. She was perfectly aware of what she was doing. She knew it was a serious thing to give up the happiness of a whole life into another's keeping. She *had* hesitated, but now she was decided.

Of course, I congratulated her on her excellent resolution, and offered any assistance in my power. After much preparation, I had the pleasure of seeing her decked for the sacrifice, and of hearing her promise to love, honor, and obey one who appeared as if he ought to render her the duty of a son rather than exercise the authority of a husband. The ceremony was soon over. The lady dried her tears, and after receiving the kind wishes of the few witnesses present, and taking a glass of wine, the gallant bridegroom and his elderly bride were whirled away, leaving their unexpected marriage to be the nine days' wonder of the little community of the village, and to be moralized upon, or laughed at by all its wise or witty inhabitants.

MRS. DAFFODIL AT A FANCY BALL.

BY VIRGINIA DE FORREST.

ABOUT a week after Mrs. Daffodil's visit to the Irving House, Mr. S. procured tickets for our party to go to a fancy ball. On the very morning of the appointed day, while we were discussing costumes, flowers, &c., Pete Daffodil made his appearance, and announced his mother's intention of taking a sociable tea with us that afternoon.

"Tell your mother that we would be very happy to see her and your sister," said Mr. S., "and you must come yourself to see them home."

Pete bowed, and vanished.

"Why, William," said Mrs. S., "we cannot receive them this evening!"

"Oh, Mr. S.," I exclaimed, seeing a merry twinkle in his eyes, "you mean them to go with us, don't you?"

"Annie," he answered, solemnly, "I shall have you burned as a witch immediately. Now hear my plan, all of you. Mrs. Daffodil, if she comes dressed in her usual extravagant manner, will be a character without any alteration."

"I've an idea!" cried George.

"Hold it fast," said his mother, gravely. "What is it?"

"Shan't tell. You'll see this evening. Well, father, continue; we are all attention."

"What can you do for Euphrosyne, Annie?" asked Mr. S.

"Oh, Annie!" said George, "make a Corinne of her, and tell her she must improvise poetry all the evening."

"Excellent!" said his mother. "Really, you are rich in ideas, George. The dress is easily arranged; now, what is to become of Pete?"

"I'll take him to a costumer," said George, "and find something for him."

Early in the afternoon, Mrs. Daffodil, Euphrosyne, and Pete arrived. George took the young hope of the Daffodils out with him. Mr. S. went for two more bouquets for the ladies, and Mrs. S. and I escorted our visitors to the dressing-room, to arrange a costume for Ninny. A white flowing robe, with a blue mantle draped gracefully over it, fastened at the shoulders by two large cameos, belonging to Mrs. S., and a wreath of laurel, made Euphrosyne look very pretty. Her bare arms and shoulders were white,

and well rounded; her fair hair was easily arranged in ringlets, and Euphrosyne's costume was complete. Mrs. Daffodil wore the identical yellow silk and trimmings she had worn at the opera.

"Miss Euphrosyne," said Mrs. S. to her, "you represent Corinne, the celebrated Italian *improvisatrice*; and, to sustain your part, you should improvise poetry whenever you find it will come *à propos*."

"Have I got to improve his poetry?" asked her mother.

"No, you are to be your own dear self!" I said.

At length, we were all ready to start. Mr. and Mrs. S. wore court-dresses in the Louis Quatorze style. George and I went as Polish peasants. Pete represented a miniature member of the Hope Fire Company, with a horn that looked very noisy. With Mrs. Daffodil and Corinne, our party was complete. I could see that George was meditating some mischief, for his eyes sparkled, and his whole face beamed with suppressed humor as we rode along to the hall.

"Come, George," I said, "what is this mysterious idea of yours, which delights you so much?"

"Here we are! I can't tell you now," he replied. "I must take care of Mrs. Daffodil."

"Give your name to the usher," said he to her.

"Mrs. Daffodil!" cried the man, as she complied.

"Lor," she said, "you needn't agone an' told all them folks! Well, I declare!" was her first exclamation, as we entered the ball-room, "if here ain't all nater and her cousin, and all dressed to kill. Well, if ever!"

"Now, Annie," whispered George, as a "Turk," whom we recognized as Louis R., approached us, "you will see my idea carried out. Good-evening, Louis," he continued.

"Good-evening. We have quite a brilliant company," said Louis, with a graceful bow to me.

"Louis," said George, mysteriously, "can you keep a secret?"

"Certainly."

"Do you see the lady in yellow silk, standing next my mother?"

"Yes, a countrified-looking person; represents Methuselah's grandmother, don't she?"

"Louis," said George, gravely, "that lady is here with the avowed intention of deceiving the whole room. She represents Mrs. Daffodil, an elderly dame from the country, and has promised to give her bouquet to the first person who discovers that she is Lady Wortley."

"Lady Wortley!" cried Louis. "Introduce me, my dear fellow."

"With pleasure," said George, and an instant afterwards Mr. Louis R. was presented to Mrs. Daffodil.

I was obliged to take Mr. S.'s arm, under pretence of having something to say, and hide my laughter in my handkerchief.

"My Lady, that is, Mrs. Daffodil," said Louis, "I am delighted to find you are still in this part of the country."

"Yes, we 'xpect to go to Bosting in about a week or so."

"I believe it is scarcely etiquette to speak of her own works to an authoress, but you must pardon me if I refer to the intense interest I felt in *your* delightful work."

"Why, where on earth did *you* see my work?" asked the astonished old lady.

"Excellent!" cried Louis. "Really, my—Mrs. Daffodil, I mean, if your genius had no other bent, you would make your fortune on the stage."

"I haint no idee of driving a stage!"

George now introduced Ninny to Mr. J., who commenced a conversation with the complimentary speeches permitted in such assemblies.

"Hush!" said Euphrosyne. "I am called upon by the dress I wear to improvise poetry. Forgive me if, by my rapt enthusiasm, I appear to neglect the calls of the ardent fervor with which you address me. 'In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,'" she continued, throwing him an impassioned glance.

"Would that I were a glove upon that hand!" said Mr. J., with a look of adoration.

"Have you, too, a soul above mediocrity?" said Ninny. "Can you appreciate the Divino effusions of genius? Then indeed you are fitted to remain at my side, and listen to the outpourings of my too susceptible soul:—

'On Linden, when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow!'"—

"Seems to me I have heard those lines before," said Mr. J. to George.

"Very likely! Our improvisatrice draws on her memory for her original ideas," and George, with a grave look, again whispered Mrs. Daffodil's supposed secret.

"Mrs. Daffodil," said Louis, "if it is not asking an impertinent question, which part of your work do you prefer yourself?"

"Well, I never calkelated much difference in it. Cuttin' out and makin' up is rather nice work."

"You mean," said Mr. J., "by cutting out, shining above your contemporaries, as a 'bright particular star,' and by making up, drawing on your imagination for your incidents."

"'To be or not to be,'" said Ninny, "'that is the question.' 'Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to'—"

Euphrosyne was interrupted by George introducing to our party Mr. L., as a Corsair, and Mr. F., as a Highland laddie. These two were told, in strict confidence, the same story as the others, and a large bet had been laid between them, to be paid to the winner of Mrs. Daffodil's bouquet. Mr. F. evidently hoped, by a direct attack, to surprise the enemy, so he approached the group. Louis R. was just retreating in despair.

"Good-by, Mr. Turkey," said Mrs. Daffodil.

"My lady," said Mr. F., as soon as the introduction was over, "did the darkness of Mr. Webster's skin strike you as much as some others?"

"I disremember him," she answered. "Is he a darkey?"

"I refer to Daniel Webster," said Mr. F.

"Oh! Well, I know Dan'l Green and Joe Dan'l's; but they aint neither of them darkeys, and they never struck me neither."

"Ha! ha! You are very cautious," said Mr. F. "You know I refer to that eminent statesman whose transcendent genius, towering above earthly impediments, soars in flights of eloquence."

"If you are getting flighty, you'd better talk to Ninny," said Mrs. Daffodil. "I can't talk dictionary words."

This sally was received, as the play-bills say, with "unbounded applause" by the group now collected around us.

"Can't come it, old fellow," said Mr. L. to the baffled Highlander. "You should go to work more cautiously. It is a lovely evening, Mrs. Daffodil," he continued, speaking to the old lady.

"Yes, but aint there a power of funny looking folks here?"

"The assembly is not, I presume, so brilliant

as you are accustomed to see in your own fair island?" said Mr. L.

"I don't live on an island. I live at"—

"Reveal not your abode," said Ninny, in a tragedy tone. "'Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness!'"

"Ninny, I'm old enough to take care of myself," said her mother.

"May I be permitted to inquire for your travelling companion, V——?" said Mr. L.

"I s'pose so," said Mrs. D. "Is she here?"

"Surely, you can answer that question better than myself."

Mr. and Mrs. S. now came up with Pete, and I heard George telling them his "idea." It was too late to remonstrate, so Mr. S. determined to relieve Mrs. Daffodil for a few minutes."

"Will you take my arm, Mrs. Daffodil, and promenade with me while this dance is in motion? George, you are very inattentive; lead out 'Corinne.' Mr. F. has already walked away with Mrs. S., and perhaps Annie will deign to take my other arm, if she is not engaged for this quadrille," said Mr. S.

I was engaged; so our party separated for a short time. When I again joined Mr. S., I found George "drawing out" Ninny, who was saying—

"Charge, Chester, charge! on, Stanley, on!"
"Were the last words of Mar—"

"Wait till I die before you tell folks my last words!" broke in Mrs. Daffodil.

"I must leave the ladies in your charge, George," said Mr. S. "I see a friend you cannot see."

Ninny grasped his hand, saying—

"Fare thee well, and if forever,
Still forever, fare thee well!"

"Lor, Ninny, he aint going to stay forever!" said her mother. "Don't be so sanguinary. Here comes the Turkey again," she continued, as Louis R. again approached us with his sister, who was also in full Turkish costume. "That's a Bloomer gal with him, ain't it?"

"My sister, Ellen R., Lady Wortley," said Louis.

No answer from Mrs. Daffodil.

"My sister Ellen, Mrs. Dandelion," said Louis.

"My name's Daffodil," said the old lady, coloring with indignation, "and not Dandelion, nor nothing else."

"I ask your pardon," said the young man, bowing. "May I beg your hand for the next dance?"

"Mrs. Daffodil is engaged to me, if she dances at all," said George, hastily.

"Signorina Corinne," said Louis to Ninny, "are you engaged in forming your charming ideas into still more charming poetry?"

"I stand," said Ninny, "'in maiden meditation, fancy free!'"

"Ain't this jolly?" said Pete, now coming up. "I've just been dancing the polka with a little Queen Mab, who says I dance first rate for a countryman. Ninny, what are you rolling up your eyes so for?"

"Refrain at this enchanting moment from disturbing the ecstatic state of my susceptible spirit," said his sister. "Spare to my rapt attention the agonizing recapitulation of your mischievous propensities."

Mr. S. now returned to us, accompanied by Monsieur de S., who had heard of Lady Wortley's presence in the room, and wished to speak with her. Monsieur de S. did not speak English, but calculated upon Mrs. Daffodil's knowledge of French for sustaining a conversation.

"Bon soir, madame," he said, bowing very low, "je suis charmé vous voir."

"Hey?" said the old lady.

"Madame, craint de se trahir," said he.

"My, gracious, he's a parlay vous!" said Mrs. Daffodil.

A singular looking person now joined our group, who immediately spoke to Mrs. Daffodil. "Flashy" is the best word to describe his dress.

"My lady," said he, "I hain't the pleasure of a hacquaintance with you, but has I am Henglish, I 'ope you will hexcuse my hintroducing myself. I am Mr. Tittersham."

"Oh, are you?" said Mrs. Daffodil. "How d'ye do?"

"I am very well," said the cockney, wriggling about his little body, to show his delight at the gracious reception. "'Ow is your ladyship? 'As your ladyship been to the Hopera?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Aimez vous la musique?" asked Monsieur de S.

"What is Mr. Frenchy saying about music?" inquired Mrs. Daffodil.

"'Avo you been to the Crystal Palace?" was Mr. Tittersham's next query. "Hit don't compare to hour 'Yde Park hexhibition, my lady."

"Do you go out to sarvice?" asked Mrs. Daffodil of Mr. Tittersham. "Are you a sarvint man?"

"No, my lady," said the astonished cockney.

"Then quit calling me your lady. Our Irish gal, Sarah, calls me her lady, and all the folks here do, too."

"Madame," suggested the polite Monsieur de S., "vous avez l'air d'être fatigué."

"Well, I am rather fleshy and gay," said the old lady, "but nobody never called me fat and gay before. I s'pose that's what you 're saying."

Monsieur de S. now turned to Mrs. S., and they were soon engaged in an animated conversation. Mr. Tittersham, not yet discouraged in his attempt to win Lady Wortley's favor, spoke to Ninny, whom he supposed to be "hanother of the Henglish haristocracy."

"A warm hevining, Miss," he said.

"The temperature of the atmosphere is compared to the fervor of my enthusiastic soul, as ice to fire."

"Yes, Miss, as you say, hicc and fire. Shall I fetch you a hicc, Miss?" And, without waiting for an answer, Mr. Tittersham disappeared into the refreshment-room. We took this opportunity to cross the room, and the cockney ran hither and thither, with two ices on a waiter,

in an ecstasy of disappointment at failing to find Lady Wortley again.

It would be tedious to relate all the efforts made to win Mrs. Daffodil's bouquet; of course, all failed. One and another of her tormentors retreated, baffled, from the field; and, at a late hour, she left the room, still holding the prize, unconscious of the envious eyes which followed its disappearance. The next morning, the following notice appeared in the daily paper:—

"Among other distinguished guests at the G—— fancy ball last evening, was Lady Wortley, the celebrated English authoress and traveler. She appeared in the dress of an elderly lady just from the country, and so admirably was the disguise sustained, that many were deceived as to her true character. Her companion, probably one of her English friends, made a most charming "Corinne," though her style of beauty was rather English than Italian. She ably sustained the character of a poetically inclined young lady, and quoted poetry with a mock sentimental air truly amusing."

THE LITTLE SHOES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY HELEN HAMILTON.

THE 6th of January, 1776, there passed on the quarter-deck of the French vessel, the *Heron*, a little scene piquant enough to merit relating. All the officers whom the service of the ship did not call elsewhere promenaded, conversing and smoking on the deck, when a young midshipman, mounting the staircase which led to the captain's room, appeared and cried: "Hats off, gentlemen; here is the queen!"

And, nevertheless, Marie Antoinette had not quitted Versailles with the aid of Asmodeus, or the *second sight* of the Scotch Highlander. She might have been seen at that moment in a corner of her chateau, sheltered against etiquette, her familiar enemy, and acting little pastoral comedies with her family. Who, then, was this usurper, who, a hundred leagues from Versailles, had picked up the sceptre which the legitimate queen had abandoned an instant for the crook?

Let us hasten to say that there was neither imposture nor treason in it. The royalty the crew of the *Heron* saluted was but the innocent and fugitive royalty of the bean. It had just fallen, thanks to fortune, to a pretty little Creole of Martinique, a relative of the captain, who, in the charge of an old aunt, was like the Virginia of Bernardin St. Pierre, about to pursue vague hopes of fortune and inheritance in the metropolis.

And it was, in truth, a pity that the young queen was but a queen in jest, for she acquitted herself of her new and lofty functions with an *aplomb* and a grace that Catherine II. and Maria Theresa might have envied.

"To your knees, fair page," said she to the young aspirant who had announced her. "Do you not see that I have let fall my glove? Come here, my council of ministers, and do not laugh, gentlemen, for the case in question is grave. I love my people; do you hear? and I wish my people to love me. The point to decide is, whether a blue rosette on my slippers would not suit better than a white one to draw their homages to my feet. How is this? I believe my head physician allows himself to fling puffs of tobacco, in the guise of incense, at his sovereign's nose! Let one of my ambassadors mount a hippogriff instantly, to go and see in the moon

if the reason of the good doctor has not followed that of the late Roland this morning."

And a thousand innocent sallies, a thousand childish coquetries followed, at which all these good seamen laughed so heartily and so long, that their great pipes went out idle in their hands.

But he who seemed to enjoy most the triumph of the amiable child was an old Breton sailor named Pierre Hello, having fewer wrinkles than wounds, who that very morning had received a medal of honor, tardy recompense of his long services, and whom the captain had just admitted to his table—to the repast presided over by his relatives, the Creole ladies. Marie Rose (such was the name of the young girl) had long wondered at the recital of the noble deeds of Pierre Hello. She had complimented him, caressed him; and the heart of the rough old man, still new to such emotions, had palpitated as strongly under her childish caresses as it had done at the reception of his medal of honor. He was the only one who waited upon her, and almost the only one who watched over her, for her aunt, a good old lady, nailed to her chair by the gout, passed the whole day absorbed in reading St. Augustine, and only interrupting herself at intervals to say: "Here, Minette! Here, Marie Rose!" when she saw her cat run into the hold after a mouse, or her niece on the deck after a ray of sunshine. But, brought up in the greatest independence, like most of the daughters of the planters, Marie Rose did not listen, or feigned not to hear. Sometimes, she mounted the ladders, or swung by the ropes, and then Pierre Hello watched her from below, ready, if she fell on the deck, to receive her in his large hands, as he would have received a weary bird, or to save her by swimming, if the wind cast her overboard. Sometimes, she amused the idle crew by her songs and dances, and then Pierre Hello, attentive, seemed to have suddenly found intelligence to understand verses, and taste to appreciate grace.

The day following that of her short royalty, the amiable child appeared sad and pensive, and the old sea-wolf placed himself before her in quiet, and silent as a spaniel who sees his master weep. She could not help replying by a

confidence to that compassionate and interrogative look. An old fugitive negress, who passed for a sorceress, and to whom Marie Rose had carried food secretly in the woods, had made her a strange prediction, which preoccupied her, and of which she recollected the exact words—

"Good little mistress, me saw in the clouds a great eagle mount very high—very high, with a rose in his beak. You, Rose, you very unhappy, then you queen, then come great tempest, and you die."

"I was a queen yesterday," she added, "and I only await now the tempest destined to engulf me."

"Don't be afraid, Mademoiselle," replied Hello. "If anything should happen to the Heron, you would only have to seize the end of my belt; there, like that, and, with the aid of God and of my patron saint (a great saint, you see, for he walked on the water without sinking, which, on the word of a seaman, is a fine miracle), you would reach land as gently as a schooner towed by a three-master."

Marie Rose, a little reassured, repaid the devotion of the brave fellow by singing him a romance, which no one had yet heard. There is an age at which all troubles pass light and fugitive, at which the melancholy of the evening dries in the morning, like the dew, and Marie Rose was at that age. The next day, she still danced. Days and weeks fled without wearing out her petulant gayety, but it was not the same with her little shoes. The last bound of a farandole carried away their last fragments. Unhappily, the wardrobe of these ladies was but slender. They were going to Paris, and had thought it their duty, before renewing it, to await the counsels of Fashion in her empire. Marie Rose was soon reduced to sit motionless beside her aunt, hiding her naked feet under her dress, moving her head and body in a feverish desire for motion, but not daring to risk a step, like that Daphné of the Tuileries, whose bust is still living, while her feet have already taken root. The little queen wept, captive, as if in an enchanted castle, and waiting till a passing knight should deliver her. The knight passed; it was Pierre Hello.

"To leave such pretty feet bare!" he said, with an accent of indignation. "One must have less than two farthings worth of heart!"

But, if the poet has said "Indignation makes poets," he has not said that it could make shoes. Pierre Hello reflected, striking his forehead, scratching his head, and promenading his quid from one cheek to the other in his mouth. The quid is to the thoughts of a sailor what the

hands are to a clock; when the thoughts move, the quid turns. He had indeed imposed on himself a very arduous question for a novice in mathematics, to make something out of nothing—a problem God alone is able to solve.

"A piece of leather! My medal and my pipe for a piece of leather!" said he, with the despairing energy of Richard III., crying: "A horse! a horse! My kingdom for a horse!"

Certainly all the nets on board would have been quickly displayed to the sea if he had known the history of Don Quixote, and had dared to flatter himself with having as happy a hand as Sancho Panza, who, casting his lines to the trout, drew out old shoes. He searched, hunted, rummaged; his hand passed wherever a mouse could go. Finally, he uttered a cry of joy, a cry like that of Harpagon finding his casket, or J. J. Rousseau beholding his periwinkle. It was not a flower—it was not a treasure that Pierre Hello had just discovered; it was something much more precious, on my word. It was a boot! the boot of a soldier killed in boarding the ship; it had rolled into a corner of the hold, Heaven knows how! Since then, it had remained there, mourning for its twin sister, drowned in the sea, or buried in the stomach of a shark, and believing, like the rat of La Fontaine, that the things of this world no longer regarded it; but Pierre Hello decided otherwise. Using his poniard as awl and knife, he pierced and cut so well that he made, in less than an hour—(I would like to be able to say that he made a pair of shoes, but, out of respect to truth, I cannot); what he made was not precisely either slippers, or buskins, or gaiter-boots, or socks, or cothurni, or babouches, or mocasons; it was, in the art of shoemaking, an original fantastic, romantic work, a thing without name; but this thing without name could, at a pinch, interpose itself, as defensive armor, between the floor and the epidermis of the human foot. The brave Hello ran at once to the cabin of Marie Rose, where, after having, with much difficulty, and amid the laughter of the young girl, imprisoned her bare feet in this droll covering, he rose, folded his arms triumphantly on his breast, and said: "There!" And, an hour later, the bayadere danced, with a weight at each foot, to the applause of her audience, doubly merited this time, for this dance combined the merit of art and of a *tour de force*; it was Taglioni and Madame Saqui foreseen, and united on one pair of legs.

At last, after a long voyage, the watch cried: "Land!" And then followed a really touching scene between the sailor and the young Creole.

"I will always think of you; and I will keep your shoes as a souvenir—as a relic," said Marie Rose to console Pierre Hello, who passed the back of his callous hand over his moistened eyes.

"Oh!" replied he, shaking his head, "you go to Paris, where new friends will cause you to lose the souvenir of poor Hello, of whom you will never think again."

"Always!" she repeated, dragged away by her aunt.

He followed her long with his eyes. She turned often, and he could no longer hear her, whilst she still repeated, waving her handkerchief: "Always, Hello, always!"

Pierre Hello could not know if the young girl kept her word, for he touched land rarely, and was killed in the American war. As to Marie Rose—

But behold! Across my story flows the mighty stream of the French Revolution, a strange river, which no one yet knows how to name. Pactolus, with sands of gold; Simois, tinged with blood; Curotus, with oleanders; its noise and its depth, reader, would give you a vertigo. Give me your hand, close your eyes, and let us spring across it.

Good! Behold us fallen into the midst of the Empire; and we are at Malmaison, the retreat of the noble and unhappy Josephine, the widow, by legal separation, of the still living Napoleon, but still empress, and still beloved by the French people, who had wedded her also in their hearts, and who had not assented to the divorce.

Leaning against a piano in her room, she listened, smiling, to a deputation of young ladies attached to her person, who solicited, tremblingly, the permission to act proverbs in the chateau.

"Willingly, my children," replied the good Josephine. "I even agree to charge myself with the costumes. Thanks to the generosity of the Emperor, my wardrobe can abundantly furnish them. Look, here is something Marchand has this moment brought me;" and she repulsed, negligently, with her foot, some furs extended on the carpet.

They were so beautiful, that Mademoiselle S. R., the youngest of the ambassadors, could not help saying, clapping her white hands, in token of admiration: "How happy your majesty must be!"

"Happy!" murmured Josephine. "Happy!"

She appeared to muse a moment, and her fingers wandered distractedly over the keys of her piano, drawing from it some notes of an old romance. Then, shaking off the recollections that oppressed her, she rose.

"Who loves me, follows me, Mademoiselles. Come and choose your costumes;" and, preceding the gay young swarm, she entered her wardrobe. All the young girls opened their astonished eyes, like the son of the woodcutter the first time he descended into the cavern of Ali-Baba. There were gauzes so light that they might have flown away, had it not been for the weight of the gems that bordered them; there were Spanish mantillas, Italian mezzaros, peignoirs of Oda-lisque, still impregnated with the perfumes of the harem, and with the powder of Aboukir; and, finally, robes of the Madonna, so beautiful that the Virgin of Loretto herself might have worn them only on Assumption day.

"Take, my children," said the good empress, "and amuse yourselves well. I abandon to you all these beautiful things, which cause you to open your eyes so, all except one thing, which is to me too sacred and too precious to be touched." Then seeing, at these words, curiosity sparkling under every eyelid: "I can show you this treasure, however," she added.

What was then this marvel they were forbidden to touch, when they ruffled at leisure so many marvels? A robe, the color of the time, of the sun, or of the moon, like those of fairy tales? That bird's egg which, according to the Arabic tales, is a diamond, and can render one invisible? A fan made of the wings of the genii of the Alhambra? The veil of a fairy? or perhaps a work still more precious, ordered by the emperor from one of his familiar demons, the *little red man*, or the *little green man*? What was it?

At last, taking pity on the curiosity which she had herself excited, with an innocent malice, Josephine searched in the corner of her imperial wardrobe, and drew forth—it was neither a gift of Napoleon, nor the work of genii; it was the work and the gift of the Breton sailor, Pierre Hello. It was the shoes of Marie Rose; for, as you have already guessed, the Empress Josephine and the barefooted dancer are but the same person, and the same heart.

When the sword of Bonaparte commenced to divide Europe, like a twelfth cake, Josephine *Marie Rose* Tascher de la Pagerie, happy this time, had the bean, and reigned; she reigned long. But one day, there suddenly arose a great tempest in Europe; the snows of Russia rose of themselves, to fall in a white shroud on the soldiers of Napoleon; the four winds blew him avalanches of enemies; and there were then in France, to the lightnings of sabre and cannon, and under the heavy rolling of the battle, earthquakes as violent as those of the Antilles.

When the heavens' became clear once more,
the prediction of the negress was fully accom-
plished; the great eagle, thunderstricken, had
let fall the rose, and the Creole of the three
islets, twice a queen, was dead in the tempest.

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THE RESULT OF A THREE WEEKS' WARFARE BETWEEN LOVE AND ARTIFICE.

BY MRS. ELLEN HARRELL CANTRELL.

"READ it, Estelle. You are always eager for the news from Hazlewood, and I fear your patience will not keep pace with the interval which must defer my perusal of your aunt's letter."

"Thank you, mother. The letter bears your address, certainly, but the writing is my cousin Kate's. I wonder what can be the matter that should induce her to write to you?"

"That you can readily ascertain by reading it."

"True!" said Estelle, laughing; and, drawing the neat little note from its tasty envelope, read aloud—

"DEAR AUNT CLAREMONT: I trust Estelle has been behaving properly to-day, that you may be in such good-humor on receipt of this as to grant an affirmative to the accompanying request. My brother, Claude, returned to us yesterday, and to make the reunion as pleasant as possible, mamma has commissioned me to invite a few young friends for the next three weeks at Hazlewood.

"Estelle is, of course, at the head of my list, and I beg you to send her to us, if she is willing to exchange her city amusements at this time for the country. By the same carrier, I dispatch notes to our city friends, Jane Lennox and Evelyn Dorsey, which I dare hope they will answer in person. So pray desire Uncle Claremont to accompany Estelle as soon as possible. She will meet her old friend, Fred Wynder, and a stranger who came with Claude—Arthur Wellesley—besides Nelly Sandford, and her brother Frank, from 'the neighborhood.' In eager hopes of your consent, and Estelle's early arrival, I remain

Your exemplary niece,

KATE DUNMORE.

Hazlewood, Wednesday, 14th."

"A seasonable incident. I hail it, for I am very tired of town. And Fred Wynder is so agreeable! Can you spare me, mother?"

"Is Mr. Wynder's company the only inducement for the visit?" questioned Mrs. Claremont in return.

"No, indeed!" replied Estelle, blushing; "I am very anxious to see dear Claude, and

every memory of Hazlewood is filled with so much delight that I am always happy in the prospect of seeing it again."

"I can certainly make no objection to a visit which seems to please you so much in anticipation, though three weeks is a long time—"

"To be absent from my own dear mother! But I can shorten my stay if I get homesick, and you should need me with you."

"Very well; if your father can attend you, you have my permission."

"Thanks. I hear his footsteps in the hall." And Estelle went out to welcome him.

Mr. Claremont gave his consent readily, having been previously bribed with a kiss, and his daughter hastened away to order the carriage for ten o'clock next morning.

Pure as a falling snow-flake, and radiant as a sunlit shower of rain-drops, was Estelle Claremont; but so disguised by her blithe spirits that even her mother was not fully conscious of the half-hidden gems of thought and genius which lay enshrouded in her mind like stars behind a sunset cloud. How her lithe form wanted in its innumerable graces, shaping itself into a thousand charms for every beholder! how her blue eyes darkened and brightened beneath their sable lashes, irresistible in every change! and how her faultless lips parted—beauteous, indulgent jailers to the sweetest birdling laugh that ever enriched our ears!

"Not thoughtless," pondered her mother, as she caught the music of Estelle's voice while she warbled some merry airs in her chamber. True, beneath the laughing waves of the rivulet flows a steadier current, giving strength and volume to the blithesome surface, like Estelle's mind, deep and powerful, though gayly decked with smiles.

At a bright, sunny hour next morning, Estelle had left an affectionate parting kiss on her mother's cheek, and was soon in the carriage with her father, trotting smoothly on the turnpike road, which made many a graceful sweep through the forest of trees. She leaned from the window, and enjoyed for a time in silence the whisperings of the fallen leaves, and the deep music of the sighing trees, which would soon stretch their naked arms to the winter's blasts.

There was food for her mind in the gorgeous assemblage of natural beauties, for to her "the seasons went and came," and told a lesson in each leaf and shrub. The autumn winds made concord in the wildest and most plaintive airs, tuning the sympathies to grateful melodies of peace and love. Estelle, refreshed by her reverie, entertained her father with many pleasant reminiscences, of which Hazlewood, with its flowers and groves, its rural bowers, sloping hills, and vine-mantled grottos, formed the scene. So interesting and enlivening was their conversation, that a glorious autumn sunset found them quite unexpectedly at the entrance of the avenue of magnificent trees which led to the imposing domain of Hazlewood.

Estelle made tender greetings to the half-withered flowers which decked the side-walks, and looked sorrowfully on the iron balustrade which surrounded the veranda, now so feebly embraced by its garlands of vine-leaves, which were yielding their strength and greenness to the autumn dews. In answer to the summons from the silver bell-knob, the massive oaken door swung on its hinges, and Estelle met an affectionate embrace from Kate.

"The very last! I was sure you were taking a leisurely buggy drive with some favored swain; but you are none the less welcome for the evening's rosy hues tinting your cheeks. I dare say you are chilled by your drive. Uncle Claremont, you'll find a comfortable fire in the drawing-room. Coz, come with me first to my chamber."

The girls soon descended, and Estelle hastened to embrace her cousin Claude, and her other relatives. Then, taking all the others assembled in a general salute, she sought the corner of a sofa with Kate, having Mr. Wynder for a neighbor. A genial fire sparkled on the ample hearth, aiding the fading daylight in revealing the features of the occupants of the room. Miss Lennox sat on the opposite side, in easy conversation with the stranger, Mr. Wellesley, and even the dubious twilight displayed beauties of form and feature which verified the most enthusiastic reports of her admirers. Her face was of the finest contour; a delicately chiselled nose; fair, pure forehead, which was smoothly banded with hair of the glossiest black; large, melting eyes, bright and intellectual; teeth of the clearest white, and complexion as pure as the Parian marble, and almost as colorless. Her form was slight but commanding, and her snowy bosom seemed to swell in proud consciousness of unrivalled beauty.

On the return of the company from supper, which had been announced soon after Estelle's

arrival, Miss Lennox sauntered carelessly to the harp, and, seating herself unasked, touched the strings, languidly at first, but gradually throwing more force and skill in her execution, filled the room with the most brilliant and ravishing melodies of successive airs. Mr. Wellesley listened attentively to her music from a seat at some distance, which, however, he showed no disposition to resign, and when Mr. Sandford, at the close of a finely executed sonata, urged her to continue, she smiled sweetly, but murmured an excuse in a voice low almost to a whisper, but so distinct as to find an echo in the opposite wall, and, rising composedly, approached the group at the centre-table.

"You are fond of painting, I believe, Miss Claremont," said she, "and will doubtless enjoy this folio of sketches by Mr. Dunmore."

"Thank you for acquainting me with a pleasure so near at hand," replied Estelle; "Claude's sketch-book has been my entertaining companion for many an hour, and I shall be delighted to examine the new contributions."

They became readily interested in the contents of the portfolio, and passed from sheet to sheet some time in silence, till Estelle exclaimed, joyfully—

"How thoughtful, Claude, to preserve this piece, the fairest spot in all of Hazlewood scenery! I have enjoyed many delightful moments from childhood onwards, at this selfsame 'Stag-King's Spring.'"

"What is the peculiar charm of the spring you mention, Miss Estelle? Is there a legend?" asked Mr. Wynder.

"Yes; but rather for its eminent natural beauties I cherish its remembrance, whence it has always been a chosen resort with Kate and myself almost from infancy. She will give you the legend."

"That can scarcely be called a legend," said Kate, "which was an actual occurrence, wholly unadorned with the colorings of fable, and of no earlier date than my brother's boyhood, for it was an exploit of his that gave name to the spring. At that time the forests of Hazlewood were far more plentifully filled with deer than at present, and Claude was over-fond of the hunt. When he was about thirteen years of age, he went out one morning with the hounds and some attendants, determined not to return without some trophy of success. They roused a stag, and after a tedious and indefatigable chase, penetrating the thickets at the risk of his neck, and careering through the woods for miles around, Claude was at last rewarded with two or three successful shots at the deer, and press-

ing on him at the spring in mention, he leaped from his horse, thinking to dispatch him with his hunting-knife. But, somewhat to his dismay, he found that he had to battle with the largest deer in the forest, and not at all so much exhausted as he had imagined. However, recovering his courage, he closed in combat with the powerful beast, and gave him his death-wound, while he himself fell fainting to the ground from the loss of blood which flowed from a cut in his arm. He was taken up by the attendant who reached the spot as he fell, and Claude, soon recovering, lived for months on the triumph of having killed the stag-king of the forest."

"Whence the name so fitly chosen to designate the place of conquest," concluded Mr. Wynder.

"What say you to an excursion thither to-morrow?" suggested Miss Lennox.

Every one assented, and the next morning, all fresh and blithe, at an early hour, they prepared for the walk.

"Oh, now! Miss Claremont," laughed Mr. Wynder as they moved off, "how very much I feel indebted to Miss Lennox's dazzling eyes this morning for having seduced Mr. Wellesley. I promise myself a delightful *tête-à-tête* with you over these crushed, scented leaves through the bracing air."

"You must think my temper very elastic, to count on a speedy rebound after such a damper as that! You intimate that my leaden eyes are the cause of my present position, since, if my eyes had been as bright as Miss Lennox's, I might have been enjoying the *superior* pleasure of Mr. Wellesley's company!"

"Fairly retorted! Now that your vanity is avenged by that home-thrust, receive me into favor again."

"Your egotism is egregious! you presume on a previous favoritism, I infer."

"Why, yes! I claim your preference by might and right, and will 'seal the compact with the hilt, and maintain it with the point of my sword.'"

"Brave champion! But a compact is a *two-sided* arrangement, I believe; hence, a negative I makes your compact one-footed, that is, lame; that is no compact at all, you sophist!"

"My hopes are *fallacious* then?"

"Entirely so."

"I will not gratify you by giving words to my despair! How do you like Mr. Wellesley?"

"He is too icy."

"Miss Lennox will thaw him."

"I shall be interested in observing the process, for I confess that seems to be the only way to

extract any amusement from him, though Kate tells me that Claude is much attached to him, and has a profound opinion of his excellence and superiority. He has remarkably fine eyes, and a musical voice; pity that he doesn't use it oftener."

"Silence is at all times eloquent, I have heard it said, and perhaps you may yet be constrained to believe it in this instance."

"Perhaps so. But you have not told me what peculiar kind of eloquence silence indicates. Illustrate; thus I might say that Mr. Wynder's occasional silence is indicative of—*exhaustion*! Does my argument apply?"

"To me it does, after such a merciless *pumping*!" And they joined in a long and merry laugh. They continued to beguile their walk with pleasantries and mirth until the whole party reached the spring. Here they paused, and watched the large, silvery waters gush from the immense moss-covered hill of rocks, leaping from slab to slab, eddying round in miniature basins, and splashing down in music on the pebbly channel which formed its course. Tall oaks entwined their arms above it, as if jealous of their lovely treasure, which bore their images in the dimpling waves, and wantonly gambolled about their roots. A drinking-cup, formed of the stag's horn, rested invitingly on the topmost slab, and all were eager to quench their thirst in the glittering waters. As Claude laid his hand on the goblet, Frank Sandford took advantage of the momentary silence to warn them in a solemn, oracular tone that, among the traditions of the spring, there was one which attributed mystical influences to the waters when drunk from the same vessel by two persons of opposite sex—that circumstance forming a mysterious link in their after destiny; and he seriously exhorted them to pause, ere they thoughtlessly brought themselves within the charmed spell.

They affected to ridicule his warnings; but that all were not entirely free from a half-concealed superstition was evident in the hesitation which they exhibited to accept the proffered draught. Nelly Sandford, a rosy-cheeked, fun-loving girl, was the first to reach her hand for the cup, which, with a careless laugh, she drained to the bottom. Evelyn Dorsey's turn came next. She was a fragile blonde, with eyes like violet-leaves imperaled with dew-drops, and countenance serenely gentle. It was now deeply dyed with blushes as she modestly persisted in refusing to drink. Miss Lennox composedly quaffed the bright liquid, and, with a half-averted glance at Mr. Wellesley, which,

unfortunately, he did not observe, returned to the question you proposed this morning. Mr. Wellesley's previous silence has been indicative of contempt, and he generously declaims now to enlighten the ignorance which he deploras."

"He certainly appears to possess sufficient intellectual superiority to regard some of us, myself among the number, with a 'downward glance;' but I think his manners entirely devoid of egotism."

"He has succeeded admirably, then, in concealing the most formidable fault in his character. That he has talent no one will deny; still less that he is fully impressed with a knowledge of its possession. His vanity is intense, and he rarely ever condescends to restrain it."

"I am sorry," answered Estelle, earnestly—"sorry that it should be so, and sorry that you have told me."

Her interest in the conversation was checked, though when the last course was concluded, and the girls had returned to the drawing-room, she could not quite dispel the effect of his animated face and mellow voice, and, throwing herself on a sofa, she remained for some time in meditative silence. The mirth and pleasantry of her companions were unnoticed, until Kate, observing her abstracted air, called out—

"I do not wonder," said he, "that my friend Claude should be so anxious to revisit this delightful spot. Apart from the attractions of his domestic circle, I think I have never seen such a charming place for a residence as this."

"Of course, you number among the family attractions his cousin, the lovely Miss Claremont?" questioned his companion, carelessly.

"Among the most powerful, assuredly. Her manners are irresistible, and her spirits magnetic."

"Her spirits are enviable, indeed; not sufficiently subdued, however, to be in perfect keeping with her position as *affiancée*."

"Ah! is she betrothed so soon?"

"Oh, yes. Did you not observe the conscious blush with which she received my allusion to her engagement?"

"She certainly did blush," answered Mr. Wellesley, in a musing tone, and he relapsed into the same unattractive silence for which he had been so severely censured a short while before.

The company returned from their walk just in time to hear the dressing-bell for dinner; and, at table, Estelle was constrained to make a silent self-acknowledgment of a very agreeable disappointment in Mr. Wellesley's powers of entertaining. He spoke with fluency on every subject which was proposed, and betrayed such culture and information, withal graced by such easy elegance of manner and winning expression of countenance, as to charm his hearers.

Mr. Wynder observed Estelle's air of absorbed attention, and remarked, in a low voice—

"I believe I can answer the question you proposed this morning. Mr. Wellesley's previous silence has been indicative of contempt, and he generously declaims now to enlighten the ignorance which he deploras."

"He certainly appears to possess sufficient intellectual superiority to regard some of us, myself among the number, with a 'downward glance;' but I think his manners entirely devoid of egotism."

"He has succeeded admirably, then, in concealing the most formidable fault in his character. That he has talent no one will deny; still less that he is fully impressed with a knowledge of its possession. His vanity is intense, and he rarely ever condescends to restrain it."

"I am sorry," answered Estelle, earnestly—"sorry that it should be so, and sorry that you have told me."

Her interest in the conversation was checked, though when the last course was concluded, and the girls had returned to the drawing-room, she could not quite dispel the effect of his animated face and mellow voice, and, throwing herself on a sofa, she remained for some time in meditative silence. The mirth and pleasantry of her companions were unnoticed, until Kate, observing her abstracted air, called out—

"Come, Jane, assist me to break up this tragic revery of Estelle's. One would think she was about to take her place on the rack of matrimony."

Miss Lennox smiled, and, taking the vacant place on the sofa, said—

"Mr. Wellesley would change his opinion if he would see you now."

"What!" eagerly exclaimed Estelle; "has he been passing opinions on me?"

"Not very lengthy ones. He only said he thought you were very wild."

"Presumptuous!" said Estelle, while an expression of mingled disdain and chagrin for a moment shadowed her lovely face.

"Where have you met Mr. Wellesley before, Jane?" asked Evelyn Dorsey. "I think you betray a slight interest in him."

"I met him in Savannah last season, during a visit to my aunt. He has a high reputation among the ladies there for elegance and fascination, and is the Admirable Crichton of the place."

"Does he reside there?" continued Evelyn.

"He owns a beautiful place in the suburbs, adorned with magnolias, hedges of wild roses, and everything else attractive; but he spends the most of his time in travelling."

"Where did your brother pick him up, Kate?"

"You mean where did he pick Claude up,"

Use Kate, laughing. "To keep your ludicrous curiosity alive, I'll just let you get the account of their friendship from Claude. Here's a few *morceaux* for it to feed upon in the mean time—the broad Pacific—scene, terrific at the harbor of San Francisco—magnanimous act of heroism in rescuing a little girl, with everything else to correspond in true novel style!"—

"Hold on, Kate, a minute," interrupted Nelly. "Jane, is he rich, and is he engaged to be married?"

"Yes; and he can be, he thinks, whenever he chooses, being fully acquainted with the mercenary motives of our sex in general."

"Just the very character, girls, that I detest," said Estelle, impetuously: "a man who buys the privilege of criticizing *young women* with his purse, and makes use of his accomplishments to mystify their brains with hopes of a proposal. I've no doubt he considers each of us ready to relieve him of the trouble of placing the ring on the right hand, third, and, in his fancy, sees our complacent lips shaped into a 'Thank you, sir!'"

"Speak a little lower," said Miss Lennox, cautiously; "the gentlemen are coming."

Estelle, who possessed a noble, high-toned disposition, was, however, very often wayward and impulsive, though she rarely ever yielded to an ungenerous feeling without being touched with almost instant remorse afterwards. So that, in the present instance, the regret which followed her hasty and severe judgment prompted her to smother her resentment and soften her manner to Mr. Wellesley, when that gentleman was thrown in her company during the evening. His first address, however, which she thought was accompanied with an overweening condescension, recalled her vexation. Raising her glove from the floor, where it lay unregarded at her feet, he handed it to her, asking, pleasantly, "If that circumstance might not be ominous at the opening of their acquaintance?"

"Be the omen evil or good," she answered, somewhat too seriously, "I will abide by it; and if the former, as your words suggest, I warn you to polish your lance."

Somewhat astonished at the tone, rather than the words he heard, Arthur paused ere he replied—

"I hope you do not speak figuratively, for I would not right away offer myself as a mark for your sarcasm. I confess I have no liking for such a weapon, especially when used by a lady who would otherwise command my respectful admiration."

"I acknowledge your kindness in supplying

the guide-post of the road to your esteem. I am emulous of attaining such an honorable station."

"You should not make me regret that I, for a moment, left it unguarded. I will be more wary hereafter, and demand the watchword."

"And what may that be?"

"If you should ever be *really* anxious to enter the postern, you will learn the countersign intuitively."

"Ah! then I fear my curiosity will consume itself, condemned to an unnatural death," laughed Estelle, evading the fervent, but respectful glance that sought her own.

"With just such an indifferent answer as that have my hopes always been dispatched. I cannot escape the fate which has thus far pursued me, and I fear that my future condemnation will be the torment of witnessing another's success in that where success is denied to me. Will you empower me to borrow the secret from Mr. Wynder?"

"Beaten! beaten! Why, Claude, you suffer Jane to win the game that easily! Shade of Deschappelles, rise up in rebuke! I could beat you myself!"

"Don't you understand, Kate, that my gallantry tempted my vigilance?"

"You can't slip the defeat that way," said Nelly. "Jane played skilfully, and conquered you with fair moves."

"You must repair our honor, my friend," said Claude, pointing to the seat he had resigned, as Estelle and Mr. Wellesley approached the chess-table.

A universal assent combined to place Arthur in the vacant chair opposite to Miss Lennox. The silence was instantly profound as the players began and progressed slowly in the game with varying success. Suddenly, Nelly gave a little start, and the other members of the group betrayed a visible excitement at the imminent danger of Miss Lennox's queen. She cast a hurried glance over the board, then, with an air of relief, moved a distant pawn. Mr. Wellesley proceeded to take the unprotected piece; but, with rapid foresight of his intention, she dropped her smooth, white, shapely hand unconsciously on his, and, raising her eloquent eyes with an imploring look to his, removed the piece to a place of security. The game continued, but was soon decided, by a few brilliant moves, in Mr. Wellesley's favor. Miss Lennox yielded the victory with apparent reluctance, though, with a graceful generosity, she complimented her opponent's superior skill.

Thus days succeeded days, in a happy succes-

ence of enjoyments, gradually developing incidents which formed the basis of future fabrics. The soft, mystic tones of Miss Lennox's voice had awakened a faint echo; the speaking eyes were rapidly weaving a spell which nearly enwrapped the senses of the handsome stranger. Mr. Wellesley was not proof against the artless exposure of a flattering preference which distinguished Miss Lennox's intercourse with him, and was almost constantly her willing attendant. If, now and then, the brilliant beauty, and the sparkling charms of natural mirth and wit, which adorned Estelle Claremont, burst like gorgeous sun-rays over his soul, warming it into momentary enthusiasm, a shadow as often intercepted the glorious light, in the person of Mr. Wynder, who kept his place at her side with all the freedom of an acknowledged suitor. At such times, a feeling of gloom and iciness pervaded his being, as he turned again to the pure glancing light of Miss Lennox's loveliness, which possessed all the interest of the moon's artificial glimmering.

With Estelle it was different. There were two characters combined in one presented to her contemplation. The one high-toned, reserved, but delicately kind, draped in attractive mysteries of romance—magnanimous, generous, and faithful—encased, too, in so fine a casket. There never was an eye so mildly beautiful or so radiantly bright; a mouth so gentle in its smile, or so firm in its compression; a head so noble in its outline, and a form so lithe and commanding. To this image Estelle yielded all the deep enthusiasm of her nature; but with its memory came the other. Eminent gifts of nature degraded by unworthy principles; accomplished, but purse-proud; talented, yet vain; high-bred, but scornful. And, impressed with this belief, which was strengthened by the casual observations of Miss Lennox, she preserved a coldness of manner towards Arthur which did not entirely receive the sanction of her heart.

At the close of a day which had been spent in visiting the neighbors, and which had been converted into the genial warmth of summer by a generous sun, the ladies and gentlemen resorted to the veranda to mingle the delights of moonlight and music. Estelle and Evelyn's guitars, with Claude's flute, made enchanting euphony with their united voices, and they lingered some time singing choruses, duets, and solos. During the performance of one of these, Nelly Sanford left the company unobserved, and noiselessly entered the house. Her lengthened absence was not noticed until Kate sud-

denly made an exclamation, and directed the attention of her companions to a white figure stealthily wandering among the trees. In much surprise, they watched the shapeless figure moving from tree to tree, and Evelyn's timid cheek blanched with superstitious fear, when Estelle hastily explained, in a low voice—

"It is Nelly, trying to frighten us. Don't say a word, but let some of us creep around in the grove, and we may yet have the best of the joke."

She had no sooner finished speaking, than she stepped noiselessly and rapidly over the leaves, followed by some of the party. Her dark dress favored her design, and, concealing herself behind a tree, she waited silently until the "disturbed spirit" should pass. Nelly—for it was she—wrapped all in white, at length came slowly by, and Estelle made a slight groan. Nelly quickened her steps, and Estelle followed. The phantom, becoming aware of the pursuit, moved on more rapidly. Estelle kept pace. It now became a chase; the goblin vanishing with increased speed, and Estelle in the immediate rear. At length a quick, sharp scream disturbed the still night air, followed by the sound of a heavy fall. The ghostly figure rapidly disappeared behind the caves of the house, and a low utterance of pain again escaped from the prostrate form.

"Miss Claremont, are you hurt?" said a low, eager voice at her ear. "Let me assist you to rise." And a strong arm tenderly encircled her form, and supported her to her feet.

"Oh, my foot!" again Estelle faintly exclaimed, as the effort to stand recalled an acute pain, and she sank back to the ground. "I think I must have dislocated the ankle-bone. In my haste, I recklessly stumbled over a fallen limb, and my foot twisted under it."

"Let me support you to the house, that you may apply something immediately to soothe the pain."

Estelle was forced to assent, though her hand trembled violently as she laid it on Mr. Wellesley's arm for assistance, while she tried in vain to control the tumultuous excitement of her feelings. There was something so unnerving in his soft, but slightly agitated voice and gentle manner; his hand was pressed on hers, and there was kindness in the touch; with but few casual words exchanged, there was yet a powerful eloquence in the bounding, impetuous life-tide.

"I am glad," said Mr. Wellesley, after a lengthened pause, "that I happened to be so near at the time of your accident. I was en-

deavoring to intercept the goblin when I heard your ejaculation. I hope your suffering will not last long."

Estelle faintly murmured her thanks; but the pain she endured, and her agitation, prevented her from saying more. They walked in silence until they reached the house, where Mr. Wynder met them with an exclamation of surprise.

"Miss Claremont fell and sprained her ankle," explained Mr. Wellesley, briefly.

"Indeed! Are you badly hurt? Estelle," he added, in a low voice, "I am sorry I was not near! Let me relieve you, sir." And, drawing Estelle's arm within his own, he lifted her up the steps, through the hall, and laid her gently on the sofa.

Estelle was powerless alike to resist the intrusion or to express her indignation, and she lay in silence from the intensity of her emotions. The girls now crowded around her, making anxious inquiries; and, as she looked up, she caught the expression of mingled dismay, commiseration, and remorse so vividly impressed on Nelly's face, and giving relief to her overburdened feelings, which would otherwise have spent themselves in tears, she burst into a hearty laugh.

Mr. Wellesley's face colored, and his brow contracted into an expression of pain, as he hastily turned and left the room unobserved. He did not pause until he reached his room, merely requesting Frank, whom he met in the hall, to make his excuses in the drawing-room, as a violent headache compelled him to retire. He reached his room, and carelessly threw himself in a great chair before the hearth, where laid some smouldering embers. He recalled the words of kind sympathy he had spoken to a heedless ear; the short, cold return of thanks to his eager offer of assistance; the readiness with which it was exchanged for other, none the more cordially proffered; and the careless, almost jeering laugh! it even now rang clearly in his ears, and his proud spirit shrank with a feeling of keen chagrin.

Estelle had missed him from the parlor, but thought that on the morrow she would repay his well-timed kindness with her thanks. After the members of the household had separated for the night, Estelle missed a gold band from her wrist, and returned to the drawing-room in search of it. As she quietly opened the door, she observed Claude standing on the hearth with his arms resting on the mantle-piece, and his head drooping over them in profound meditation. Stealing noiselessly to his side, she gently

wound her arm about his shoulders, saying, in a playful voice—

"In the land of dreams, Claude, and sweet Evelyn Dorsey the *ignis fatuus* of your wandering thoughts."

"Not so, dear coz," he replied, as he affectionately returned her caress. "I was thinking of your very incomprehensible self."

"Why, Claude, that's a libel on my candor; and what there is in me beyond your comprehension I can't imagine."

"I once entertained the fond thought of seeing my noble friend Arthur the husband of my sister or my cousin. Kate seems to have decided the impossibility of the former by her partiality for our childhood's companion, Frank Sandford; but you, Estelle, are free, for I cannot doubt your feelings for Mr. Wynder; and how you can resist such excellence and generous nobility as distinguish my friend's character is, I repeat, incomprehensible."

"Poor disappointed sage! But you certainly can't forget, Claude, that, even were I to acknowledge your friend as charming as you appear to consider him in the case of love and marriage, there must be some slight encouragement on the part of the gentleman before the lady makes a point-blank proposal."

"True, I have observed with some annoyance Arthur's apparent preference for Miss Lennox; but that I attribute entirely to your indifference, for I am certain he yielded full homage to your charms in the beginning of this visit."

"Thank you, dear cousin, for the implied compliment; but let me tell you, in truth, apart from all this rivalry between Jane and myself, I do not consider the object worthy of contention."

"Not worthy!" echoed Claude. "What reasonable objection can you make to Arthur, Estelle?"

"I own that I have rarely met with one who possessed such eminent personal attractions; but the heart, the heart, Claude! I detest vanity, moneyed pride, and unqualified assumption!"

"Who suggested these ideas, Estelle? I am certain they did not originate in your generous mind. Listen. Arthur Wellesley was the only child of a widowed mother, and, until her death, he resisted all the allurements of beauty and fashion that were temptingly exposed to his not insensible gaze, that her declining years might not be desolated or embittered by a share of his love and attentions when she coveted the whole. A self-sacrificing, devoted son, he is as true and single-hearted in friendship. On the eve of my return hither from San Francisco, I was unexpectedly prostrated with a violent attack of

yellow fever, and no inducements that I could offer would move the captain of the steamer to gratify my earnest request for a passage home. He was inexorable, and I was compelled to remain—left, as I thought, entirely to the mercy of strangers, in a place where such a thing as disinterested kindness was almost unknown. You can imagine my inexpressible gratitude, when Arthur soon after entered my room and announced his intention of remaining with me, though I was aware of his intense anxiety to reach home. He nursed me untiringly by night and day; and to him, under God, I owe my recovery. After a tedious delay, we were at length in a state of glad excitement off the heads at San Francisco, watching from the deck an approaching launch laden with some passengers. The surf was high, and the vessel rocked in the mounting waves as the launch neared her side; but, bounding up on an opportune billow, a terrified lady was laid in safety on the deck. Her daughter, a lovely little girl of five or six years of age, was the next to be put on board, and the mother's feelings of affrighted eagerness were vividly pictured on her face, as she watched the boat with hungry glances. The boatman, grasping the little girl with a strong arm, held her aloft in readiness for the momentous spring, and, as a timely wave heaved in, he threw her upwards. But the brawny arms extended to receive her were robbed of the precious burden by the jealous billows, and the little girl sank in the treacherous waves. The horrified mother fell in a deadly swoon, while Arthur, with marvellous quickness, throwing off his coat and boots, leaped after her in the sea. Fortunately, he was in time to grasp the helpless child, and, assistance being at hand, he was soon in safety with his unconscious burden."

Claude said no more, and a silent tear coursing down Estelle's cheek was her only tribute to this magnanimous act of heroism. After a pause, she said, feelingly, "He is worthy of our highest honor, dear Claude!" and then left the room.

Arthur Wellesley slept little that night, and, at an early hour next morning, he left his room for the purpose of enjoying a solitary stroll through the woods. As he passed the door of the library, he heard a low voice singing irregularly to a guitar accompaniment; and, supposing it to be Evelyn Dorsey, he turned the knob and entered. A lovely face turned on him a smile of welcome, and a friendly voice gave the morning salute. It was Miss Lennox. She motioned to an ottoman near her, and quietly dropped the instrument on the floor.

"Pray continue," said Arthur. "It was the music that tempted me, and my spirits are peculiarly susceptible of the refreshing influence of sweet sounds this morning."

"I was but trying to recall a long-neglected air, that I remembered to have heard you admire at Savannah."

Mr. Wellesley's face colored with pleasure at this gratifying evidence of former partiality, as he replied—

"I would listen to it now with renewed pleasure."

With a modest sweep of the dark fringes on the smooth marble cheek, she touched the strings and sang—

"I do not love thee; no, I do not love thee,
And yet when thou art absent I am sad,
And envy even the bright blue sky above thee,
Whose quiet stars may see thee and be glad.

"I do not love thee; yet, when thou art gone,
I hate the sound, though those who speak be dear,
Which breaks the lingering echo of the tone
Thy voice of music leaves upon my ear.

"I do not love thee; yet I know not why,
Whate'er thou dost seems still well done to me;
And often, in my solitude, I sigh
That those I do love are not more like thee."

There was an impassioned ardor in the singer's voice, and a dewy eloquence in the black eyes, that inflamed a strange tenderness in the heart of Arthur Wellesley; and, yielding to the rush of feeling, he caught the unresisting hand from the still sounding strings, and clasping it a moment in his own, he said, impetuously—

"It were a grateful thought to know one's self thus fondly remembered and so sweetly sung. If but the heart always made entire concordance with the lips!"

"The lips are sometimes careless jailers of the heart's secrets! The light of their smiles is far oftener the beacon of a comfortable harbor than the false signals they are said to be!"

"If the shrinking soul could but trust the strand!" faltered Arthur.

"Courage is never wanting to the ardent mind."

"Then," continued he, recklessly, "should I ever be drifting to the yawning maelstrom which threatens every life-bark, let your eyes be the land-mark."

At this interesting juncture, the door was thrown open, and the girls entered noiselessly, in readiness for breakfast.

"You here before us, Jane! you'll make a brisk housekeeper. And, 'pon my honor, here's Mr. Wellesley, too! a very industrious pair!" exclaimed Nelly, with a significant laugh, while

she keenly enjoyed the overwhelming confusion of Mr. Wellesley, and Jane's ill-concealed annoyance.

"Jane was always an early riser," said Kate, generously interposing.

"A very laudable trait of character. I have no doubt it is favorable to health to sharpen one's appetite with such invigorating morning exercises," continued Nelly, mercilessly.

But Jane had, ere this, recovered her remarkable self-possession, and quietly disclaimed the credit of making any physical exertion, as she "had only come to the library in search of a book which she had left there the evening before, and had just been joined by Mr. Wellesley."

Mr. Wellesley's embarrassment rapidly vanished in his astonishment at such unblushing equivocation, and his rising disgust was immediately followed by a feeling of intense relief, that the well-timed intrusion had prevented his committal for life. A pang crossed his breast as he turned and beheld the fair, blooming face of Estelle Claremont; and, vividly impressed at the moment with a painful recollection of the last night's occurrences, he bowed coldly, almost haughtily, in return to her cordial "good-morning!" Estelle's warmth of manner immediately receded to fridity, and the distance between them was increased immeasurably.

On account of the temporary lameness which prevented Estelle from walking, a ride was proposed that evening, and, all arrangements being made, the young ladies equipped themselves, and were in readiness at the appointed hour. It so happened, however, that Mrs. Dunmore was confined to her room by a violent sick-head-ache, and Kate was compelled to forego the pleasure of the ride, to attend at her bedside and officiate in the household duties, which, in consequence, devolved upon her. She insisted that the others would not give up the ride on account of her inability to accompany them, for Nelly had declared her intention of keeping her company, and they accordingly set out. Arthur Wellesley, bidding them not to wait, re-entered the house at this moment to get his riding-whip, which he had left behind, probably with forecast, and Claude rode on at Miss Lennox's side. Frank Sandford paired off with Evelyn Dorsey, leaving Estelle and Mr. Wynder in the rear. Arthur reappeared at last, and springing to his saddle, he followed in a leisurely gait; but dreading a *tête-à-tête* with Miss Lennox, of whom he was completely disenchanted, he chose the lesser evil, and, at the risk of intrusion, he reined in his horse as he came up with Estelle. Her look of blank astonishment at this unexpected ma-

nœuvre did not tend to reassure him, but the ready politeness which induced her to address him in a pleasant voice contributed somewhat to his relief. Mr. Wynder rattled on with his characteristic volubility, without apparently noticing the accession to their company.

"I can scarcely believe, Miss Estelle," said he, "that three weeks have passed since we left L——. To-morrow closes the term of mourning in the city circles, where the sunshine of your presence has been thus long deplored! How your resuscitation will enliven them!"

"You must have been favored with the cap of Fortunatus. I don't conceive how else you could make such brilliant predictions."

"Oh, no! I judge of the future by the past, having been three several times a sharer in the general sorrow for your absence, and participated in the joy of your return to the now desolated city."

"A flower that seems so well qualified to adorn these beautiful natural scenes would suffer by transplanting to an atmosphere less pure and healthful, I should fear," said Mr. Wellesley.

"You forget, sir," answered Mr. Wynder, "that the flower you mention blooms in beauty alike in hot-house and shaded woodland, discovering brighter hues with every change."

"Mr. Wynder," interposed Estelle, "at the risk of being denounced as ungrateful, I must confess that your extravagance is oppressive."

"What! not give me credit for a candor that is all unequal to the theme? Your modesty should not reject the spontaneous tribute to your charms!"

"Be it so, then; but let me warn you that the imperial flower you extol must be only looked at from a distance—such daring touch might be rewarded with a stinging thorn."

"That would but incite me further to gather the precious leaves so jealously guarded by the prickly hedge."

"The barrier is impassable—the flower safe from your grasp," said Estelle, decidedly, with an evident desire to end the subject.

"Well, well!" laughed Mr. Wynder, turning to Arthur, "we can admire ardently what we dare not covet."

Arthur had been deeply interested in the dialogue, which had betrayed more earnestness than the words and manner appeared to express; and, as Mr. Wynder concluded speaking, he said, in a tone so low that it reached Estelle's ear alone—

"I would dare *much* for such a prize!"

Her fair cheek tingled with a flush of pleasure at the words, and the varying expressions of dreamy delight that flitted rapidly over her face

in the long pause which followed, spoke volumes of hope to the eager eyes that watched its play in silent ecstasy. The conversation gradually revived and flowed on pleasantly until, winding through the woods on their return, warned by the sinking sun, they approached the Stag-King's Spring.

"At last we are here," said Estelle; "I can now dismount and rest my poor foot, which has been mercilessly rubbed in the stirrup for the last half-hour. I think it is inflamed more by the incessant strain than it would have been with walking."

Accordingly they dismounted, and, after the horses were tied to the neighboring trees, the trio seated themselves on the mossy bank in grateful repose. They were scarcely seated, when Estelle's horse disentangled the reins from the branch to which they were loosely fastened, and began cropping the stubble of withered grass on the ground. Mr. Wynder arose to secure him. The horse moved away at his approach, and being just then startled by the report of a shotgun, he galloped off through the woods. Mr. Wynder, as *cavalier servant*, leaped into his saddle and rode rapidly after the frightened animal, leaving Arthur and Estelle alone.

Alone! with the forest-trees overspreading them, and the gurgling waterfall dashing in music at their feet. Their eyes met; a silent, tender meeting, and Estelle turned hers in confusion to the spouting cascade. There stood the quaint horn drinking-cup. She reached it from the mossy slab and dipped it in the eddying basin. She drank half-dreamily, and replaced it on the jutting rock. Another hand had taken it—a pause—and Arthur Wellesley had drained the goblet of the fabulous waters.

"Assure me, Miss Claremont," he said, "that in gladly submitting to that generous fortune which thus unites our destiny in this mystic draught, I may not unknowingly lay claim to another's right. End the perplexing suspense which your words to-day have heightened beyond endurance, and tell me frankly if this fair hand is given in troth?"

"Betrothed!" echoed Estelle. "I am only surprised that a *question* should imply the possibility of such a thing!"

"Then I am free to sue for it as my own; free to indulge the long-repressed feelings of passionate love that have been struggling for the mastery in my soul; free to hope that you will not disdain the devotion of a heart that never yielded to any sovereignty but your own!"

Again their eyes met in a language more eloquent than the smoothest verse, and with the

red sun sinking in the blue clouds' embrace, the forest-trees overspreading them, and the gurgling waterfall dashing in music at their feet, they pledged their mutual love.

That was a blissful walk—Arthur supporting his affianced wife on his arm, followed by his faithful horse, exchanging professions of lasting regard, and the explanations which were needed to account for their long estrangement. As they reached the avenue, Mr. Wynder rode up with the strayed horse by his side, and, as hot with vexation and his violent exercise, he threw himself from the saddle, his jealous, searching glances shot rapidly from one to the other, and, comprehending the full measure of his despair, he walked in silence to the house. The last evening of their intercourse was spent in pleasant amusements, and the next morning the majority of their number returned to L—.

Some weeks after, Mr. Wynder followed his card into Miss Lennox's drawing-room, and while conversing with much apparent good-humor, he remarked, significantly—

"Mr. and Mrs. Wellesley left this morning for Savannah."

"Yes," replied Miss Lennox, returning his glance with calm composure; but when he made his parting compliments, and his retreating footsteps had died in the doorway, a silent tear rolled down the white, impassive cheek, the only evidence of regret she betrayed at the defeat of ARTIFICE IN THE WARFARE WITH LOVE.

THE THRICE - W E D D E D .

BY MARION HARLAND, AUTHOR OF "MARRYING THROUGH PRUDENTIAL MOTIVES."

CHAPTER I.

"It is actual profanation!" exclaimed Miss Eleanor Lisle, with a look of vexed disgust.

"What is the sacrilege, Nelly?"

"You remember that antique gem of a stone cottage, at the foot of the Clearspring Lane?"

"I saw it yesterday, and found it one of the few things Parisian taste has left unaltered. The creeper clings to the rough walls with its tough fingers; the white rose-bush is as full of buds; the elms meet over the door in the same arch as when you, Agnes, our poor dead Raymond, and I, frolicked upon the broad step, and kind Nurse Martin sat in the porch with her eternal knitting-work. I stopped to drink at the spring, too, and thought more of the days of Nelly, Aggy, Ray, and Will, than of the accomplished Misses, the travelled Wilton Lisle."

"How tiresome and odd you are, Wilton! What pleasure you can have in perpetually running back to those old times which everybody but yourself has forgotten, I cannot divine. I am in a literal, not a sentimental mood, to-day. I have no particularly tender associations connected with your cottage, but it is visible from the east drawing-room windows, and my 'Pa-

risian taste' could desire no more picturesque object to close the shady lane than its brown roof and vine-covered walls. Imagine the tap of a shoemaker's hammer ringing up to the house on still summer evenings, and the odor of leather, cabbage, and onions regaling our senses, when the wind is from that quarter! As your memory is so tenacious of past events, you may recollect that it was the fashion once to form parties to visit Mrs. Martin, and the praises that her clean house and pleasing manners elicited. Now I shall never dare lead company in that direction for fear of the apparition of a fat man, guiltless of coat and vest, apron on, and last in hand, and a slovenly woman, standing arms akimbo, and mouth open, to stare at the 'quality.'"

"I begin to understand. Pride, not affection, is alarmed. It is not that a stranger dwells in the hallowed place, but that that stranger is a shoemaker, and one of his craft is not a very dignified appendage to the Lisle mansion. Talk of republican simplicity and equality! I tell you, Eleanor, that society lacks stamina and durability, which smiles upon a brainless ape, because he is well clothed, and his velvety paws unsoiled by labor; and sneers at the *man*

who makes honorable the sentence: 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.' I have seldom seen a handsomer or more intelligent man than this same shoemaker, or a prettier woman than his bonny bride."

"You have called, then?" said the young lady, contemptuously.

"I have. I was passing the cottage yesterday morning before you were awake, when I heard singing. The door was open; and, looking through the little parlor, I saw, in the back room, a young man, in a leathern apron, plying the waxed-ends upon a shoe, and humming a clear, deep bass to a popular roundelay which his wife was warbling. She sat near him, binding a shoe-vamp; her profile turned to me. It was as regular and delicate as any high-born damsel's; the roses upon her cheeks, if less vivid in color than some I have seen, had the advantage of being natural; and I would have given broadcloth, broad acres, and blood, to be that Apollo of a Crispin, as she paused in her song to ask, with a happy smile: 'Is that right, Harry?' showing her work. My shadow fell upon the floor, and he looked up. I advanced, begged pardon for the intrusion; 'but the house had been, in my boyhood, a favorite resort.' 'No apologies are necessary, Mr. Lisle; you are welcome,' he said, rising, and offering his hand with manly frankness. 'My wife, Mrs. Thorn.'"

"And you bowed at the impertinent's forwardness, as if 'Mrs. Thorn' had been a duchess, and she blushed and simpered?"

"I *did* bow, most respectfully; but she neither blushed nor smiled. She had risen, and, after returning my obeisance with quiet grace, would have left the room, had not I requested her to stay. With a half apology, Thorn resumed his work; but I doubt whether your irresistible Captain, or the pompous Schmidt, could have talked as sensibly and agreeably as he did during my visit. He is a native of New England, and learned his trade there. Three months since, he married and came to this State. He spoke hopefully of his aims and prospects, having been favorably received and encouraged in the neighborhood. 'You find time for reading, I see,' said I, glancing at a well-stocked book-shelf. 'Yes, sir; Minnie here will not hear of my working after dark; so I read aloud.'"

"What is Wilton talking about?" drawled Miss Agnes, a fairer and less animated beauty than her elder sister. She entered from the garden, and sank upon the first ottoman, "wearied to death."

"Why he has been peeping into a turtle-dove's

nest," rejoined Eleanor; "and has an idea of playing Werter to a shoe-binding Charlotte."

"Ah! that odious cobbler! I wonder papa let him have the house!" said Agnes, with a faint show of displeasure. "You are not really in love with his wife, are you, Wilton? Susan says the creature is passable."

"The creature is more beautiful, and, to your shame be it said, more of a lady, in behavior and heart, than my sisters!" retorted Wilton, angrily, turning on his heel, without waiting to mark the effect of his rebuke.

Agnes widened her sleepy blue eyes. Eleanor's glowed with rage.

"They move before the year is out, or I am not virtual mistress here, Mr. Wilton!"

CHAPTER II.

LITTLE cared Minnie Thorn that her nearest approach to the "great house" was in her journeys to the spring, hardly more than a stone's throw from her dwelling. Her world was her rustic home; it was comfortable, neat as hands could make it, and more attractive to her, with its shadowing trees and mantling creepers, than the gloomy grandeur of the pile of turrets and chimneys upon the hill. Mr. Lisle, senior, a proud, weak old man, vain of his pedigree and possessions, drove by their door almost daily in his easy gig, bestowing but a careless stare, as upon objects too far beneath his notice to awaken curiosity. Eleanor's sweeping habit, streaming plumes, and bold horsemanship, excited wonder, not envy; and still less did she grudge her the attendance of the mustachioed ex-cadet, who was her cavalier as invariably as another man, similarly bearded, but Dutch in physiognomy and form, sat beside Miss Agnes in the softly-rolling carriage. Serenely complacent in her happiness, they troubled her less than she did them; for often a scorching ray from Eleanor's flashing orbs fell upon her simply-attired figure, and Harry's white shirt-sleeves, as they talked together in the porch on warm evenings; and over Agnes's full red lips flitted a smile of disdain.

One afternoon, Eleanor and her lover rode by, unaccompanied by carriage or groom. The lane was crossed by a gate a few yards below the cottage. It had rained in the morning, and the bars and latch were black and wet. The gentleman bent over his horse's neck to the fastening, but Eleanor restrained him.

"Forbear, rash youth! You forget that your

gloves are immaculate, and that you are going to visit ladies."

"But the gate must be opened."

"True. Call the cobbler out."

Minnie was at the window, and arose to retire from view; but he espied her.

"Ask your husband to open this gate, will you?" said he, in a tone neither respectful nor exactly insolent.

"He is not at home, sir," replied she, coloring.

"Then come yourself!" said Miss Lisle, imperiously. "Make haste! we are in a hurry!"

With crimsoned cheeks and shaking hands, Mrs. Thorn performed the service demanded. Eleanor seemed as if she would have ridden over her, so impetuous was the forward leap of her steed through the gateway; and as the officer struck his rowels into his charger's side to pursue her, he flung a coin to Minnie. This was too much! She stamped it into the red clay, and burst into tears. "She was not a slave, to be ordered about and insulted by those purse-proud highflyers! Harry was as much of a nobleman as the best of them, and she was his wife. He should know of their conduct as soon as he came back!"

She had dried her tears, and was busy pruning the rose-tree, when a gentler voice accosted her. It was Wilton Lisle, also on horseback, who, raising his hat, inquired for "Mr. Thorn."

She returned the answer she had given before.

"Ah! well, I will call as I return. I wish to see him on business. Good-day."

"He is a gentleman," thought Minnie, her wounded vanity mollified by his courteous demeanor. "Very different from the rest of the family! I don't know that it will do any good to complain to Harry. He is quick-tempered, and I should be sorry to have him quarrel with his landlord."

Her prudent resolution was established, as she removed his hat and wiped his heated brow after his long walk. He was tired and hungry; she must refresh, not annoy him. Their supper of light, sweet bread, cool milk, and berries was dispatched; the round stand—too diminutive to merit the title of table—set back, and the young couple repaired to their seat upon the step. The moon, glancing through the elms, floored the porch with arabesque mosaics; the air came fragrantly over the mown clover-fields; and the insects were chirping their vespers in the short turf of the yard.

"God's blessings are free to all!" said Harry, drawing his wife's head to his shoulder. "We enjoy this evening as much as though we lived

on the hill, instead of in the valley; don't we, Minnie?"

"Yes," said she, somewhat reluctantly; "I had rather be Minnie Thorn, the shoemaker's wife, than Miss Lisle; but——"

"But what? My Minnie is not tired of her lowly home already?"

"No, indeed! But things are so strangely ordered in this world! I am content; but you are good and handsome, and, if self-educated, greatly superior to that haughty imbecile, Mr. Lisle."

"Minnie, take care!"

"You are, Harry! And why is he put above you? why has he the right to dictate to, and oppress you?"

"Minnie, darling, he is not above me; but our spheres are different. In the sight of our Maker we are equal, although his means are more ample, his responsibilities heavier than mine. As to enjoyment, his heart is void to-night in comparison with my full content. Riches do not purchase happiness, Min, nor does honor always secure the self-respect of him to whom it is awarded. What has brought on this unusual frame of mind, little one?"

"Oh, nothing!" said she, evasively.

"Listen! do you not hear a horse's tramp?"

"Yes; it is young Mr. Lisle."

"He is kind and pleasant, if he is rich; hey, Min?"

Wilton galloped up to the gate, and stooped to open it; but his horse sheered.

"Let me do it, Mr. Lisle," said Harry; "he is skittish."

"Thank you; but stand aside, if you please. Skittish or not, he must do as I choose. He has been vicious all day. Now, sir!" and his whip descended upon his flanks. The animal reared and plunged, but refused to approach the gate. By main force, Wilton brought him within reach of the latch, and again, as he leaned towards it, was jerked away. Spur, rein, and lash were exercised upon the refractory brute at once. He arose high in the air, vaulted, and cleared the fence, falling upon his forehead with a concussion that broke his neck, and dashed his hapless master to the ground at some distance off.

He did not unclothe his eyes in consciousness until seven days after. He was in unknown quarters. The whitewashed ceiling was lower than that of his spacious chamber at Lisle Hall; the walls were bare, except where a single engraving—a portrait of Franklin—hung; the sheets were clean, but their texture was many degrees coarser than the fine linen which had draped his couch from boyhood. It was early

morning; he knew this by the dewiness and odor of the breeze that flapped the curtain of the lattice-framed window. He remembered nothing since his going forth to ride. Where had he passed the night? A softly-uttered observation of the beauty of the day attracted his eyes to the speaker, who sat in the door between this and the next apartment. He saw the very scene he had described to his scornful sister, after his first visit to the shoemaker. The waxed ends and the needle were moving as rapidly as then; but their progress was noiseless, and the song hushed.

"If Mr. Lisle could taste this air, it would revive him," continued Minnie. "He was very restless all night."

"And you would sit up alone!" said Harry, reproachfully. "Put down your sewing; your eyes are dim."

"Oh, no! I must be employed. I am so anxious about the poor young gentleman. So handsome and good as he was, too! Miss Lisle said, yesterday, they had succeeded in obtaining an efficient nurse, who would come to-day. She cannot mean better—whatever she may do—than I."

"Still, if his family desire it, you must give him up promptly and cheerfully," answered Harry.

"Not if I can speak to prevent it," thought their auditor.

Minnie flushed painfully, as she looked towards the front door.

"Here they are!" she whispered; and Miss Lisle's suddenly head bowed under the low portal; then came the family physician, and a fat, fussy-looking woman. Wilton feigned slumber.

"Really, Mr. Thorn!" began his sister, "this is obeying the doctor's directions! He enjoined quiet, and you are here, with your lapstone and hammer in his very ears! Doctor, danger or no danger, he must be carried up to the hall to-day. Better kill him at once than torture him in this style!"

Minnie spoke quickly and fearlessly to vindicate her husband.

"The bench and lapstone are out of doors, where their noise cannot reach the house, Miss Lisle. He only brings such work in here as can be done quietly."

"Tut!" was the unfeminine response; and, gathering her robes about her, she picked her way daintily over the spotless floor to the bedside. "How is your patient, Dr. Bailey? Why, he is awake and sensible! Wilton!"

He motioned to her to put her ear to his mouth, and summoned all his strength for the energetic whisper—

"I am grieved and ashamed of you! Send that woman away! I won't have her about me."

Dr. Bailey nor his father could alter his purpose. He was silent during their harangues; but at the close his answer was pithy and resolute—

"Send her away! I will have no nurse but Mrs. Thorn!"

And most unwillingly the aristocrats had to confide him to her care.

A strong friendship grew up between the youthful pair and their sick guest. To them he was docile and patient; his sister's visits always left him uneasy or fretful. The perfumed handkerchiefs suffocated him; their silks rustled, and their jewelled fingers did not soothe him as did Minnie's cool hand upon his brow. No marvel that he was voted, in family conclave, "obstinate" and "whimsical," "perfectly infatuated with the society of those low people!"

It was a sorrowful day when his removal could be no longer postponed. He was able to walk about the room, and looked much as formerly, only paler and thinner. Harry laid aside his work to chat with him awhile, before the carriage arrived to bear him away; and Minnie hovered around, "a smile on her lip, a tear in her eye," busied in little arrangements for his comfort.

"She will have it I am good as new, despite my cleft skull," said Wilton to his host.

"And you are!" interposed Minnie. "When the hair grows over the temple they shaved, it will conceal the scar."

"It was an ugly scratch," remarked he, examining its zigzag lines in a mirror; "an inch lower, and my good looks would have been ruined."

"A hair's breadth deeper," thought Harry, "and what then?" "Minnie has the most singular scar upon her wrist I ever saw," he said aloud. "It is a well-defined butterfly."

Minnie bared her plump wrist and showed it, a wonderfully accurate figure.

"A coal of fire had fallen into her cradle, while she was an infant, and burned her," she said; "Harry says, if I run away this mark will certainly betray me."

Wilton had but a short time to spare, and he employed it in an ineffectual endeavor to persuade Thorn to accept some substantial token of his gratitude. He offered him the cottage rent free for life, or as long as he chose to occupy it, when he refused direct pecuniary compensation. Harry was thankful, but stubborn.

"I can support her and myself while health and strength last. My daily thanksgiving is,

"I owe no man anything." Rob me of my independence, and you deprive labor of its zest. You say I am 'born for a higher station than this.' If so, I will work my way up to it. The little we have done for you was done heartily and freely; we are repaid in seeing you well again. If you please, we will change the subject, Mr. Lisle."

"But one promise," pleaded Wilton. "If you are unfortunate or disabled, you will apply to me first of all."

"I will!" replied Harry, relaxing his proud tone, and his eyes moistened as he gave his hand to the generous youth.

Wilton did not mend as rapidly after his return home, and his uncertain gait and pallid check alarmed his selfish parent for the succession of his name and estates. Avaricious only when the welfare and aggrandizement of his family were not concerned, his purse-strings were put into his son's fingers when Dr. Bailey recommended that he should again travel for some months. With his going, the hall and cottage were separated by an unbridged chasm. The tossing cataract of life at one did not disturb the sunny ripple of the other. As winter approached, however, Harry became conscious of a counter-current, sluggish at first, but gaining power so steadily as to excite serious misgivings. He was surprised that the cold weather brought such a trifling increase to his earnings; but another shop had been opened half a mile off, and he received no more orders from the hall.

"What will you do?" asked Minnie, as he heard that his rival had been sent for to the houses of two of his best customers, to measure their children's and servants' feet for their winter shoes.

His bright face had looked troubled for an instant, but he answered, smilingly—

"An enemy hath done this! I will live it down, Minnie; never fear!"

How far his probity and unflagging energy might have enabled him to do this, was not to be proved. On a dreary autumn day, he walked five miles to carry home some work, for which "it was not convenient" for the rich farmer "to pay him just then;" and on his weary and sad way back he was caught in a violent shower of rain. Drenched and shivering, he reached his dwelling, and Minnie's tender skill was inadequate to ward off an attack of acute pleurisy.

It is trying to the most resigned to lie, useless and helpless, upon our couch of languishing, set carefully without the thronged path of busy life; yet with its din penetrating our ears, its rush

and whirl jarring our nerves, even if we can be spared from the battle-field; but to know that with every minute of inaction are passing returnless opportunities for acquiring comfort and honor—to be tended through sleepless vigils and days of pain by Penury and Disgrace, gaunt, inexorable handmaids ready to pounce upon all that is esteemed precious—this was poor Thorn's fate. The latent energy of Minnie's character stirred nobly. Her husband's nurse, with no domestic to relieve her of any part of her housework, she solicited plain sewing from the ladies, then from the servants in the neighborhood; and toiled over her needle early and late, only quitting it to reply to Harry's call.

His illness was tedious. For awhile, his slender savings and her industry kept them above water; but nearer and nearer stalked Want. On Christmas Eve, Minnie carried her clock—a bridal gift—to the wife of a small farmer near by, who had admired it, and obtained, in exchange, about one-fifth of its value in money, and a chicken, which she served up in broth for her husband's dinner next day. He could not touch it; hiding his face in her bosom, he wept like a child.

"Oh, Minnie! to think that I have brought you to this!"

She coaxed and expostulated.

"They could live along," she said, "for the few weeks that might remain of his sickness. The darkest hour was just before day;" and many other worn phrases of consolation, such as rise to the lips when the comforter's own heart is sinking.

"You are starving!" said he.

"Oh, no, dear Harry! I have food enough, and could eat with an excellent appetite, if you could enjoy it with me."

"But the doctor's bill, Min! it must be met."

"It shall; and Dr. Bailey is rich enough to wait!"

"The rich are not always the merciful," murmured Harry.

Rap! rap! struck the head of a cane against the door; and Minnie went to it. A thick-set man, his dreadnought and fur cap covered with snow, walked in unceremoniously, nodded, with a "Sick! hey?" to Harry; and shook himself before the fire, with the gesture and splutter of a huge water-dog.

"Your name is Thorn, I b'lieve?" he said, approaching the bed.

"Yes, sir;" was the faint reply, followed by a distressing fit of coughing.

"And I'm the sheriff of the county."

Minnie exclaimed in terror. Harry was calm in his innocence.

"Well, sir?"

"Well; your rent is due the first of January, and Mr. Lisle asked me to call and see whether it was ready."

"I paid him a quarter in advance."

"Of course; or you wouldn't ha' got the house; but there's three-quarters more, 'cording to my arithmetic, which ain't the one you Yankees study, maybe. You are keen chaps at a bargain; but 'casionally you run against your match. The money 'll be forthcomin', I s'pose?"

"I am entirely unprepared for this," said Harry, the blood rushing to his temples at the fellow's impertinence. "My sickness has obliged me to use the money intended to defray the debt. I never expected that Mr. Lisle would press me for it; if I recover, it is safe."

"If! he don't believe in 'ifs,' nor I neither. My advice to him was, 'Catch him while you can!' I've writ down against half the Yankees I've had on my books, 'Dead,' or 'G. T. T.' You've got notice. I'll come and see you New Year's day."

There was a grand ball at the house on the hill that night; and the snow-flakes' quiet fall, incessant though it was, did not deter the most delicate of the bidden guests from venturing out. They did not feel the cold in their close carriages, and bundled in mufflers; but through the drifts there struggled a pedestrian in the same direction, whose limbs were stiffened and sore from her walk. The hall door was stretched wide, having just admitted a group of revellers; and as she paused in the porch to brush her cloak and shoes, a young man crossed the hall, in stature and general appearance so like Wilton, that she sprang forward with a glad cry—

"Oh! Mr. Lisle! you have come"—checked as she saw his face.

"I am Wilton Lisle's cousin. Can I do anything for you? Do you wish to see either of the ladies?"

His friendly smile encouraged her. Too difficult to apply directly to the stately landlord, and with tolerable confidence in her ability to move one of her own sex, she complied with his invitation to walk in, asking to see Miss Lisle "for a few minutes."

He showed her into a small library, warm and bright as summer, and upon whose rich, flowered carpet she almost feared to tread. Over the mantle hung a small oval picture of a lady, so like Miss Lisle and her brother, she could not doubt that it was their mother; and she was still gazing into its dark eyes, and gathering assurance from their mildness, when Eleanor's voice sounded at the opening door.

"Three minutes; just three!" said she, coquettishly.

"Three centuries," responded a voice, Minnie knew for the mustachioed officer's. "I shall count the seconds."

"Very well. Let me know when you are tired of the employment;" and she shut him out. Regally she looked and moved in her chameleon velvet robe of brown and gold, the white shoulders swelling above the narrow edge of lace. Upon one strayed a curl that seemed to have escaped from the braids of its kindred tresses, of precisely the hue of her dress. Diamonds sparkled upon her neck and arms; and although Minnie was ignorant of their value, she was overawed by the splendor of this imposing apparition. The smile retreated from Miss Lisle's lips as she recognized her visitant. "Did you send for me?" she inquired, in indignant surprise.

"Yes, madam," faltered Minnie; then, as the image of Harry, sick, and lonely, and miserable, rose in her mind, she forgot all else. "My husband is very ill and cannot work. The little I can do just procures food and fire; yet a man came to-day with a message from your father, threatening us for the rent of our house. Miss Lisle, you are a woman, and can feel for us in our destitution. Harry does not ask to be forgiven the debt, but for time. He is honest and honorable; your father will never regret his indulgence. Will you not intercede for us?"

Her language and manner were so different from what might have been looked for in one of her station, that the vain, ill-furnished heart of the patrician belle felt a pang of jealousy firing the dislike she already had for the "cobbler and his wife."

"I have nothing to do with my father's business. I cannot interfere," she said, icily.

"But you are his child; he will not refuse you."

"I shall not make the attempt," and she turned to go. Minnie caught her robe. Its magnificence was nothing to her now.

"Miss Lisle, my husband will die if he is driven out in this weather. Leave us our poor shelter; you, who have every luxury, spare us a home!"

"You are very presumptuous! Are you insane?" and her fingers were loosed from their hold. "Take him to your relations. We cannot provide for all the paupers in the State."

"I have no relatives except my mother and sister, who are far away. My dear, dear mother! she never thought her child would beg in vain for a place to lay her head! Oh, Miss

Lisle, you had a mother!" she pointed to the portrait; "for her sake pity us!"

The beauty reddened with anger and rising shame.

"I have said all that I can. If my father had consulted me, you would never have been his tenants."

"May I see him?"

Minnie stood against the door.

"He is engaged. Let me pass!"

Her frown menaced annihilation; but Minnie spoke again.

"Will you tell me where your brother is?"

A push shoved her aside, and she was alone. Every door of hope double-barred. Before Wilton could hear from them they would be homeless. She tottered back to the fire, stunned and irresolute. Harry—high-minded to the last—had strictly forbidden the most distant allusion to the services they had rendered their oppressor's son. Her inquiry as to his address was wrung from her by the agony of the moment; and a clutching at this straw was the only sign her mind gave of vitality.

There was a tap at the door; then it was opened, and Eleanor's admirer looked in—

"Where is Miss Lisle?" he inquired, hastily.

Minnie's answer was a request at which he started.

"Can you give me Mr. Wilton Lisle's address, sir?"

With a bold stare and prolonged whistle, he wheeled towards the door. The almost delirious woman followed. Wilton's cousin was still in the hall, apparently watching for her.

"Hazlitt, a word in your ear," said the officer, linking arms. Ere his whisper was concluded, his friend broke from him.

"Are you the Mrs. Thorn who nursed Wilton after his accident?"

"Yes, sir."

He wrote hurriedly upon a card.

"That is his direction. You will make no improper use of it, I know."

She seized it, and stammering her thanks, wrapped her cloak around her to go out into the storm.

"Have not you an umbrella?" pursued Mr. Hazlitt.

"No, sir. I do not need one."

"Take this," and he carried it into the porch, raised it, and put it into her hand. With a grave face, he watched her disappear amid the falling snow.

"You've lost one umbrella," said the militaire, smiling with a bad grace.

"I would lose fifty sooner than let a woman

go out, so unprotected, on such a night. I wonder how far she has to walk?"

The person addressed knew the distance well; but he did not care to see an associate of his racing down the long avenue to overtake and escort a mechanic's wife.

"How sorrowful she looked!" said Hazlitt to himself. "My respected uncle is not famed for his charities; but he surely will not let her suffer."

He took his departure upon the succeeding day, or the memory of his cousin and friend might have induced him to inquire into the condition of his humble acquaintances. Prompt as was Mr. Lisle's agent, Dr. Bailey's was as quick. Harry had paid for his medicines, but not for attendance, and the benevolent Galen, whose love for money was only equalled by his thirst for popularity, aware of the evil disposition of the Lisles towards his debtors, forwarded both of these darling objects by sending in his bill an hour after the sheriff had levied upon the furniture of the cottage, stripping it of everything but the bed, upon which the sick man lay, and his now useless bench and tools.

"The law must be obeyed," said her myrmidons; and she was to the pound of flesh, for Harry Thorn lay that night in the county jail; in a week, in the repose that knows no troubling, he filled a pauper's grave.

CHAPTER III.

It was one of the hottest days of an unusually sultry August, and the sun poured fiercely upon a small wooden building, situated directly upon a sandy road, in what is called the "pine region" of North Carolina. The house was but a story and a half high, and could not contain six rooms; yet upon the turpentine-exuding boards of a red sign, hung upon a pole at the door, was scrawled:—

"TAVERN. BY MRS. WILLS."

The doors and window-facings were of the same sanguinary hue; the rest of the edifice had never known the touch of the brush. In front of the main entrance grew a melancholy Lombardy poplar, a horseshoe nailed to its trunk, not to keep off witches, but as a hook for bridles. At the farther end of the house was a no less lugubrious locust, its dusty and shrivelled leaves crackling in the burning wind like the blackened tendrils of Jonah's gourd; and in its shade—if its feeble resistance to the glaring rays could be so called—a woman sat at the window

making a man's jacket. It was of coarse, stiff homespun, a servant's garment; and her taper fingers, although roughened by labor, could hardly drive the spike of a needle through the fabric. She was youthful, not yet five-and-twenty, and neither her face nor figure was in keeping with her surroundings. Her expression was unnaturally gloomy; the eyes seemed to have wept their last tears, so stern was their dejection; she looked like one, not prepared for the worst, but to whom it had already come. Yet she was very lovely. The cold despair of the eye did not fade its lustre; and the habitual compression of the lips gave character to a feature that might else have been of too soft a beauty.

A stir ran through the house; a troop of tow-headed children scampered to the outer door, imitated by a barefooted negro woman; then the sharp tones of Mrs. Wills rang out piercingly—"Ike! Ike! come take these 'ere horses!"

"My servants will attend to them, madam," said a decided voice; and, for the first time, the sewing-woman looked out.

A travelling-carriage was in the road, a colored man removing the baggage, and another disengaging one of the horses from the harness. The animal was trembling, and scarcely able to stand, yet he turned his head intelligently as his master came to his side. He might have been fifty—he might have been seventy, so erect was his carriage, and so blanched his locks; his features had a foreign cast, and he spoke with a slight accent.

"Take him to the stable," he ordered. "I will see to him myself. Madam"—to the officious landlady—"can I have a room?"

"Certainly, sir; certainly, sir. Walk this way, sir."

"It is not necessary that I should see it. John, look to the baggage." And he disappeared in the direction of the miserable stable.

John rejected Ike's clumsy aid in transporting two large trunks into the best room, the one in which our seamstress was seated. Mrs. Wills preceded him, inquisitive and bustling; but the dignified valet stayed not to listen or reply.

"De Trac-y," read Mrs. Wills upon one of the trunks. "I wonder where he came from, and where he's goin'?" Good gracious, how heavy! Full of money, maybe."

The needlewoman was silent.

"Ain't you done that jacket yet?" exclaimed her task-mistress, jerking up a sleeve. "You ain't worth the salt to your bread. Git up, and clear away your scraps and litter. Be s'pry; you've got to help cook supper. Folks like that 'ar man don't stop here every day."

But, when tea-time arrived, the stranger declined sitting down at the common board. He "would have a cup of tea and a slice of toast in his room." His servants were attending to the horses; and Mrs. Wills, while entering at his "fine airs," revered his equipage and luggage too sincerely to be unaccommodating.

"Here, Laveny." And the young woman above mentioned arose from the table. "Do you take in this waiter, and wait till he's done; and, mind you, ask him what else he'll have."

The traveller was pacing his chamber with a firm, military tread that gave no indication of fatigue or infirmity. He bowed and seated himself at her entrance. Setting the tray before him, she retired to a window, and gazed listlessly from it, unconscious that his falcon eye was upon her. He did not withdraw it until his meal was concluded, when, with another silent bow, he recommenced his promenade. It was arrested by her question—

"Do you wish anything more, sir?"

Her voice was sweet, and had no vulgar tone. That brief sentence evidenced her dissimilarity to the family into which she had been cast.

Mrs. Wills visited the state chamber in person before bed-time, ostensibly to take in a tallow-candle, and see that "Mr. De Trac-y was comfortable."

"Your horse is better, I b'lieve, sir?"

"Yes, madam."

"But you won't be able to drive him tomorrow, I reckon?"

"I think not, madam."

"Come far to-day, sir?"

"Thirty miles."

"Dear me! You don't live in Carolina, I s'pose?"

"No, madam."

"Whar then? In Virginny, maybe?"

"Yes, madam, in Virginia."

"Them's likely niggers of your'n. Raised 'em yourself, sir?"

"Yes, madam."

Laconic as were his replies, he sustained the catechism with more suavity than his formal aspect had led her to anticipate, and she lingered to beat up the pillows and fold down the counterpane.

"Were you born in Virginny, sir?"

"No, madam; in France."

"You don't say so! Why that's over seas, ain't it?"

"Yes, madam." Here he smiled, and asked a question in his turn. "Have you resided here long, madam?"

"Goin' on fifteen years. Ever since I was

married. Mr. Wills, he died three years ago last spring; and here was I, a lone widder, with six children, to scuffle for myself."

"Have you not a sister living with you?"

"No, sir. I reckon you took Laveny for my sister."

"Ah! only a niece?"

"No, sir; she ain't no kin. Thank gracious, nothin' like her ever came of *my* family. She was a sort o' cousin of my old man's. There was three of 'em, a mother and two daughters—New Yorkers. This Laveny married some no 'count fellow in Virginny, and t'other two went to Wilmin'ton, 'cause the doctors said the oldest girl's health couldn't stand cold weather. Well, she died 'bout the same time Laveny's husband did; and what should her mother do but sell out what little she had, and start off to see her daughter. She got this far, and was took sick; so she sent on money to bring Laveny, and you may be sure I had my hands full for six months, for she lived that long, and kept her bed all the time. This girl didn't have enough to keep her from starvin', and my old man says: 'You may stay here and help my wife, till you can do better.' But she's enough to tire anybody's life out, with her long face and ladyish ways."

"Very probable, madam. Will you be so kind as to send my boy John to me?" interrupted her hearer, yawning.

He remained through the following day, taking his meals in his room, and preserving, in Lavena's presence, the same respectful silence until evening, when, as she handed him his tea, he addressed her abruptly—

"I have a proposition to make to you, Mrs. Thorn, which may appear strange; but I beg you to hear me through. You are young, poor, and dependent upon one whom you must dislike. I am rich, and my own master. I feel daily the need of a companion and a stay under my increasing infirmities. I am a physiognomist, and you will suit me. I am a fatalist, and was led hither to find you. Therefore, madam, I propose to marry you, take you abroad to afford you such advantages of education as my wife must have, then, returning to my Virginia estate, introduce you into the best society in the country. In recompense, I demand of you only the duty and attention an indulgent husband may ask of a wife. While I eat my supper, you can deliberate upon my offer. If you are the woman I take you to be, your answer will be ready when I have finished."

Beyond a start at the beginning of his speech, she exhibited no sign of confusion or surprise; and now, withdrawing to her window, she

looked forth with the same immobility of countenance, never stirring until he pushed aside his cup. Then she took up the waiter, saying, calmly—

"My situation cannot be made worse. I accept your offer; stipulating, however, that the ceremony shall be performed here, and by a minister whom I know."

"It is well. This is the twentieth of August. On the twentieth of November, I shall be here again. Make no preparations, but expect me. Remember, November twentieth. Good-night."

Three months more of petty tyranny, and insulting jeers, and uncomplaining toil. The dry leaves of the locust had dropped, piecemeal, from the sapless twigs; the lean poplar stretched up naked arms in its woful prayer towards heaven; the sandy road was heavy with a fortnight's rains, when the De Tracy carriage again halted at the "tavern" door.

Four gentlemen alighted; and Mrs. Wills recognized, with astonishment unspeakable, the clergyman of the district and two of the most influential men in the region—one a justice of the peace, the other a respectable farmer. But one trunk was removed this time, and John carried it in to "Mrs. Thorn," who accepted it without remark. It contained a complete suit of travelling apparel, and ere Mrs. Wills, having recovered from her wordless amaze, had exhausted a tenth of her invectives, the bride presented herself in the room where the gentlemen were waiting. With involuntary and profound respect, they arose and saluted her. She appeared like a lady of rank, who had put off her disguise, rather than the maid-servant of an inn assuming one, so well did the habit of gray silk, the rich cashmere, the velvet bonnet and plume become her. Disregarding Mrs. Wills's abuse and interrogations, she advanced and laid her hand in the proffered one of Colonel De Tracy, for by this title his companions addressed him, and the ceremony proceeded. It was short. A written certificate of the marriage, signed by the witnesses, was intrusted to the minister, another given into the bride's keeping. The coachman had not quitted the box, and John stood holding the carriage door for his new mistress. Mrs. Wills disdainfully repelled her attempt to bid a civil farewell; but her righteous indignation did not urge her to the length of refusing the munificent douceur tendered by the colonel in the name of "Mrs. De Tracy."

The whip cracked, the blooded leaders darted off, bearing not Minnie Thorn, "the cobbler's" widow, but Lavinia De Tracy, the beautiful consort of the descendant of a line of nobles.

(To be continued.)

THE THRICE-WEDDED.

BY MARION HARLAND, AUTHOR OF "MARRYING THROUGH PRUDENTIAL MOTIVES."

Concluded from page 23.

CHAPTER IV.

COLONEL DE TRACY's eccentric character was so notorious that, when news reached his American friends that he had married, it was believed, an English lady, and was living in comparative seclusion in Paris, it was "no more than everybody had expected," although some were sadly chagrined thereby. His nearest relatives were the son and daughter of a half brother. They had been reared and educated by him, and notwithstanding his liberal portionment of them at their marriages, which had occurred several years previous to his, it was currently whispered that he would make the eldest son of one his heir. This unforeseen matrimonial adventure was a terrible blow to parental ambition and friendly prognostications. But his letters—succinct as war dispatches—were regular as ever; still, at stated, and not distant periods, came costly gifts to his grand-nephews; so hope maintained a struggling existence.

Two years elapsed, and without a word of preparation, the Colonel electrified Captain and Mrs. De Tracy, who resided within a few miles of his country-seat, by walking into their breakfast-room one clear, frosty morning. The lady's scream was certainly unfeigned, as was the gentleman's start; their expressions of overwhelming rapture may have been equally so; but a less shrewd judge of human nature than himself could have detected a dryness in the inquiries they would have had cordial, after the health of "his lady."

"And when are we to see her, dear uncle?" asked Mrs. De Tracy. "I am so impatient!"

He drew two cards from his pocket.

"She charged me with these for you."

"'At home Thursday evening;' but you will not forbid her relations from seeing her before that time? Almost a week!"

"By my desire, she receives no company until then," he replied; "I wish her to recover entirely from the fatigue of travelling."

He made a similar excuse to his niece and her husband, upon whom he likewise called that day; and it was with curiosity, whetted by

delay, that they repaired, with the crowd, to his house at the set time. His establishment befitted his wealth and taste, and it could have had no fairer mistress than the magnificently-attired woman who awaited her guests. Refined in every motion and look, with strength to conceal her own feelings, and tact to divine those of others, she was listening, with an air of respectful attention, to her lord's last injunctions.

"It is, as I have told you, my intention to adopt one of the boys, sooner or later. In the choice, I shall be guided by further observations, and in these I require the aid of your woman's eye and wit. I should decidedly prefer Edward's son as bearing my name, were it not that certain early follies of his father have weakened this predilection. His sister Emily married a man of talent and good family, a cousin of Edward's wife. A proud race are those Lisles."

"Lisles!" almost passed the lady's lips; and a perceptible tremor did not escape the speaker.

"Do you know them?" he inquired.

"I have heard of them," was the quiet reply.

"From me, doubtless. I must have spoken of them frequently to you."

He never had; and his further remarks were unheard. This Eleanor, then, whose dutiful letters to her "very dear uncle" she had perused, was her early, causeless foe! the murderess of her husband! for thus was she branded in the fire-stamped book of her Past. She, to whom she owed her lifeless heart and frozen affections; her infidelity in human goodness; her utter isolation of spirit, would be in her presence in a few minutes; and she must meet her with honeyed phrase; must curb the impulse to dash her to the earth, and crush her with reproaches and scorn!

She was first upon the list of arrivals. Leaning upon her husband's arm, she swam into the apartment, as haughty in her bearing, if not so handsome, as formerly.

Mrs. De Tracy knew them instantly; and as he drew off his glove to present his hand, she thought of the dripping gate-latch and trampled coin. They did not recollect her. She had not feared this. Eight years had transformed the blushing girl into the self-possessed woman.

Very ladylike and composed was her reception of their lavish courtesy; the blood of the Lisles did not impart to their daughter an air of such thorough breeding. Later in the evening, another couple pressed through the fast-filling rooms. For a moment, people and walls were a rushing whirlpool, whose turbulence scarcely subsided, ere "My niece, Mrs. Hazlitt," "Mr. Hazlitt," were named.

She had heard that he was cousin to the Lisles; but how could she expect to see the frank, kind face which had beamed upon her that bitter Christmas night—the one star amidst black clouds?

While the dance and song and hilarious converse went on—in that brain, prematurely matured, as her moral sense was blunted by injustice and suffering, there was preparing a scheme of revenge. Her mentor's maxims of fatality and destiny had not been without effect upon her mind. Chance or Fate had placed the rod and the reward in her hand. Beneath the placid mien and smiling face burned the spirit of a Medea; to herself she was a heaven-ordained Nemesis.

Colonel De Tracy, if a singular, was yet a sensible man. He had asked duty, not affection, of his partner, and was too wise to disgust her by doting fondness. They were an exemplary couple; he attentive to her comfort and wishes, she deferentially consulting his. But at heart he loved her with a proud affection. He was gratified by the readiness with which she ruled and modelled herself to his standard of female character, and her rare loveliness was an irresistible appeal to his feelings. Reserved to others, he unbent much of his formality in their private interviews; testifying his confidence in her discretion by conferring with her upon his most important projects. She knew her power better than he did. Until now, it had been a subject of indifference, awakening neither gratitude nor ambition; it suddenly magnified into an engine of incomparable force.

Others saw it as well. Eleanor cultivated an intimacy as sedulously as she had shunned her once. Her advances were met by a passive politeness she did not know whether to attribute to indifference or indolent pride. The Hazlitts did not experience this. Emily was naturally amiable, and her good traits had been developed by her husband's judicious influence. Mrs. De Tracy and himself were friends at sight; and her partiality extended to his family. His children were much at Oakwood—the Colonel's place; not more frequently than Walter and Eddy De Tracy; but these last were never en-

couraged to visit "aunt's" boudoir, or to climb her lap, as were the little Wilton and Emily.

They were at play in the parlor one day—Mrs. De Tracy reading apart—when a hissed oath from Walter caused her to lift her eyes.

"Fie, Walter! never use that word again!"

"Papa says it," said the boy, confidently.

"But not in the presence of ladies, sir!"

"Yes, ma'am! He told mamma so the other day, when Mr. Robinson dined with him. After he went away, papa came into her room, and said '—the luck!'"

"And what did your mother do?"

"She said, 'Dicey will be your ruin. Why don't you stop?' Who is Dicey, aunt?"

"One of your father's intimate acquaintances, I suspect," rejoined she, with a meaning smile.

Another thread of the web of Fate thrown into her grasp! Colonel De Tracy's hatred of gaming was inveterate—confirmed, if not formed by the circumstance that with his brother it had been an incurable passion, he having committed suicide in a rage of disappointment at his ill-fortune at Rouge-et-Noir. The manner of his death was carefully concealed from his son, until his uncle discovered that the propensity was hereditary. Edward was then at West Point. The Colonel made a journey thither; disclosed the whole sad story, paid his debts of honor, and swore solemnly to disgrace and beggar him if he repeated the offence.

Mrs. De Tracy had gathered rumors of her step-nephew's embarrassments—unpardonable, in view of his wife's fortune and his uncle's liberality, and suspected foul play. Robinson was a noted sporting character; his name—as Captain De Tracy's guest—was enough to awaken surmises prejudicial to his character. She waited patiently, watchfully for proof. Supports to her convictions were abundant; but it was long before she could procure positive evidence against the wary gamester. What she was sure were losses, he explained as retrenchments, and talked prudently of "foolish expenditures for plain country people," and of his wish "to lay by a pretty fortune for each of his children." A pair of carriage-horses were sold; "Eleanor was afraid to ride after them;" the carriage followed; "he wanted a lighter vehicle." His absences from home were more frequent and prolonged, and Eleanor's perturbed demeanor would have touched a less vindictive heart than that of the woman she had so cruelly injured.

So passed spring, summer, autumn, and Time ushered in another winter.

"I have an invitation for you," said Eleanor, entering her uncle's study. "Wilton is to be

married at last, and writes pressingly for us all to come to Lisle Hall. Here is his letter to you, uncle."

"Whom does he marry?" asked Mrs. De Tracy.

"A Miss Somebody or Nobody from the lower country. I never heard of her before; but he is so odd, we did not hope for a brilliant match from him. Indeed, I wonder at his marrying at all. He is thirty-two years old. I quite long to have him see you; you will be mutually pleased."

"I hope so," answered she, carelessly.

"You would like to go, then?" inquired the Colonel.

"If you think proper, sir."

He liked to show his wife, and, moreover, had a sincere friendship for Wilton; so an acceptance was sent. Mrs. De Tracy manifested more interest in this visit than was consistent with her usual fashionable nonchalance. Her husband smiled at her occasional flutter of expectation or pleasure, in the preparation for, and during the journey. Obeying a characteristic whim, he had avoided questioning her with regard to her early life. To him, her existence commenced with his acquaintance. Having ascertained that she had no near connections to interfere with his rights, he made her a De Tracy, and chose to forget that she had ever borne another name.

At Wilton's invitation, a wild, ungovernable desire to revisit her former home, and see their only friend, took possession of her, and mingled with it was a foreboding, triumphant, yet agitating, of a coming crisis; a belief that another, and the most marvellous, was to be added to the startling coincidences of her eventful life.

It was a chill, rainy evening when they reached Lisle Hall—still a mansion of noble proportions, but dwindled from her memory's picture. Wilton met them upon the steps, and hurried them into the house with an hospitable welcome. Upon the threshold was a girlish figure, with a face of changing smiles and blushes. Passing an arm around each, Wilton said, reassuringly—

"Mary, this is your sister Eleanor."

The smile faded, and the color deepened upon the timid bride's cheek, as her lips touched the icy ones of her sister-in-law; but Alfred Hazlitt's joyous greeting and his wife's kiss restored the bloom. Agnes and Mr. Schmidt were there also. They seemed to have given themselves up to the cultivation of the animal to the infinite detriment of their intellectual natures. His bushy whiskers had a streak or two of gray, and

her hair was growing scanty; but their excessive obesity made these trifling disfigurements appear of no consequence, being in itself a sufficient disguise to those who had not seen them for nine years. Wilton acted the host well; but, as Eleanor had predicted, one of the company had his especial notice. Alfred and his charming partner engaged the modest "Mary" in conversation; the Colonel challenged Mr. Schmidt to a game of chess; Edward lounged in a fauteuil, listening, apparently, to Eleanor's chat with her sister; and Wilton stationed himself by Mrs. De Tracy.

The Past throbbed along her pulses at his remembered voice. He alone was unchanged. His most honored guest, his gentle courtesy did not exceed that he had paid her as the humble mistress of a mechanic's cottage. Her emotion, hidden as it was, touched a responsive chord. He became strangely interested in his fair visitor.

"Excuse me," he said, at length, gazing admiringly upon her classically moulded face; "but you certainly are not quite a stranger to me. We must have met before."

"Probably." Her voice was untremulous. "You have travelled, and we resided abroad for some time. The face of a countrywoman, seen under such circumstances, would not be forgotten soon."

"Perhaps we did meet. My memory retains features as faithfully as events, and holds both too tightly for my comfort, sometimes."

"And do you, the *enfant gâté* of Fortune and Love, speak of forgetfulness as a blessing? Of what would you seek oblivion—of injuries or benefits?"

"Of my injuries, and the misfortunes of others."

"Would it not be wiser to profit by the experience you have gained, than to bury recollection?"

"If I can profit by it," he replied; "but if the injury cannot be atoned for, the misfortune is irreparable; all that is left for us to do is to forget."

Mrs. De Tracy retired at an early hour, upon the plea of fatigue, and, in accordance with her earnest request, was permitted to leave the parlor alone. She dismissed her maid when she had removed her satin robe, and hastily donned her travelling-dress in its stead. Then she threw a large shawl over her head, opened the door, and, after listening a moment, glided down the staircase, through the hall, out into the pitchy night. The drizzling rain fell steadily; but she paused not; she trod the well-known lane—past the Clearspring—its bubbling unruffled by the

swollen waters—she gained the cottage. It was dark and still—evidently uninhabited. She could just discern its outlines through the gloom; but she felt for the broad door-step, and in the shelter of the rude porch laid herself upon it. The rain plashed mournfully from the eaves and from the elm-boughs; the wind echoed her sighs. The stone was wet with tears—the first she had shed since her mother's death—and these were of a fiery, bitter flood, such as those who weep them should pray never to have renewed. One half hour to memory and grief—she arose.

"This injury cannot be atoned for; this loss is irreparable; yet I do not court forgiveness!"

CHAPTER V.

"I SEE that ugly hut is standing yet. Why don't you pull it down, brother?" said Mrs. Schmidt, as she lounged by one of the east drawing-room windows, next morning.

"Not a stone shall be displaced while I live!" was the response, and a look, half regret, half sternness, passed over his face.

"As romantic and ridiculous as you were in your boyish days! If Eleanor had not married, it would not have been there this long."

"Eleanor may rest content with her efforts in that quarter!" said Wilton, bitterly. The subject evidently excited him.

"She has never repented her action," retorted Eleanor.

"I have suffered enough for both," said her brother; "but we will not revive that unhappy affair upon this, of all days."

"I wonder what ever became of the shoemaker's wife," continued the unimpressible Agnes. "She was almost pretty, rather vulgar-looking, though."

"Enough of cobblers and sentiment for one morning," said Eleanor, rising. "Lavinia, I am a petitioner for your ladyship's judgment of my dress," and the aristocratic arm encircled Mrs. De Tracy's waist. The embrace of a bon-constrictor would have been more endurable; but, save by a stiffening of the slender form, as if the muscles had changed to steel, she did not resent the caress.

Among the throng of carriages which disgorged their contents, that evening, at Wilton Lisle's door, a travel-stained hack was driven up, and a gentleman, stepping from it, inquired for Colonel De Tracy.

"He is dressing, sir," said a footman. "Will you come in and wait?"

"My business is urgent. Take him this card."

"He will see you," said the servant, returning; "please to walk up stairs." He conducted him to Mrs. De Tracy's dressing-room.

"Mrs. De Tracy, Mr. Holman," said the Colonel, shaking hands with the new-comer. "I sent for you here because we shall be less liable to interruption. I trust nothing unpleasant has procured for us the honor of this visit."

"An affair which, I hope, may terminate more happily than my fears forebode," replied the polished man of law, with a glance at Mrs. De Tracy.

"You will speak as if we were quite alone, Mr. Holman," answered the Colonel, observing it.

"Then, sir, not to detain you from your friends longer than I can help, will you look at that paper, and say whether the signature is genuine?"

The Colonel adjusted his eye-glass. The honorable blood of the old Frenchman mounted to his silvery locks, as he exclaimed—

"It is a forgery, sir! a baso fraud! Who has dared!"—His choler choked him.

"I feared so! I feared so!" said the lawyer, slowly, shaking his head.

"Do you know a man in your neighborhood by the name of Robinson, Colonel De Tracy?"

"I do! A professed gambler! an infamous swindler! What of him?"

"He presented that check at the bank. In consequence of some knowledge of his character, or from the clumsiness of the forgery, its genuineness was doubted, and the man detained until I could be sent for. I should have exposed him immediately, but for his assertion that he had received the draught from—I grieve to say it, sir—Captain De Tracy."

"Edward!" ejaculated the horrified auditor. The paper fell to the floor.

Mr. Holman picked it up, and went on, in a tone of sympathy—

"There is one way to save him. You can acknowledge this as your handwriting, refusing to return it to Robinson."

"Never, sir! never!" The resolution of a Brutus spoke in his uplifted head and marble countenance. "The viper has struck his fang into the breast that warmed him! He is no nephew of mine; the law may take its course!"

"Pardon me, Colonel De Tracy, but these are matters little suited for a lady's ears. Mrs. De Tracy would perhaps prefer to be spared the further discussion of this deplorable circumstance."

"I thank you, sir. Lavinia, you had best retire."

She scarcely awoke in the corridor, when a closet door flew open, and Eleanor sprang out, ghastly with terror.

"I have heard all!" she gasped, seizing her arm. "My husband! save him!"

The hour had come! A pitiless, retributive spirit filled her breast at the appeal, expelling all womanly compassion.

"Come with me," she said, composedly. "We cannot talk here."

Down the lighted staircase, through the bustling hall, she led the way to the little library, and locked themselves in. With frantic vehemence, Eleanor pleaded for her erring husband. She told of his misery at the dominion of his tyrannical passion; all was lost, she said—their estate secretly mortgaged—their furniture even pledged to the sharpers who had robbed him. "But let it all go! Let us live in pinching want; only spare us this dreadful shame! You can soften that stern old man. Oh! think of my children, my guiltless babes, and have mercy!"

In her distraction, she clung to the knees of the silent, unmoved figure.

"Eleanor Lisle! look at me!"

She obeyed, with a shudder at the un pitying accents.

"Nine years ago, a heart-broken woman knelt to you in this room, knelt where you are crouching now, and besought your mercy in behalf of an innocent husband. You drove her out into the storm with contumely; by your agency, he was deprived of every earthly comfort; you murdered him as certainly as if you had stabbed him to the heart. You talk of pity! you, who, only this morning, gloried in a deed a fiend would blush to confess! I answer you as you did her, 'I never interfere' with Colonel De Tracy's business. As you 'could not provide for all the paupers in the State,' we may be excusable for declining to furnish means of escape to all the criminals."

Mechanically, Eleanor arose, and stared wildly at her accuser and judge.

"Who are you?"

"The avenger of innocent blood," was the reply. "You vouchsafed her but three minutes; I have wasted twenty."

She unbolted the door, and passed, with unruffled brow, into the crowded saloon.

To her surprise, Colonel De Tracy entered at the same moment, with his man of business, whom he presented to Wilton as a friend who had arrived unexpectedly. The old officer's face was ashy pale; but he controlled himself admirably, receiving recognitions and introductions

with his customary precise politeness. Exchanging bows and friendly greetings with all in his way, he drew near his wife. His brief whisper was caught by no other ears.

"All must be kept quiet to-night. We must have no scenes."

Alfred Hazlitt, asserting his right, as Wilton's nearest male relative, opened the ball with the bride, and the groom led out Mrs. De Tracy. Edward was her *vis-à-vis*, so dashing and gallant that his partner, one of the belles of the evening, did not remember that he was a married man, until Wilton asked him "what had become of Eleanor?"

"Hush!" said the Captain, affecting to whisper, looking towards the object of his present devotion, and they whirled away, laughing.

Wilton offered his arm to his companion at the close of the set, and they sauntered through the room, chatting gayly and seriously by turns. The deep recesses of the windows were filled with shrubs and flowers, and as Mrs. De Tracy put out her hand to pluck a leaf, her bracelet became unclasped. Wilton recovered it dexterously before it touched the floor.

"Allow me!" he said, playfully.

She held up her arm, dimpled and round as a child's. With a start and exclamation he raised it to the light. He had perceived and recognized the butterfly scar. One moment he stood transfixed, gazing at her in mute astonishment; then throwing back his hair, revealed the irregular cicatrice upon his temple. Subterfuge would be idle. She spoke ere he could.

"Your suspicions are just, Mr. Lisle; you know me as Minnie Thorn. This is not the time or place for explanations."

"I must, I will speak!" said he, impetuously. "I dare not defer what I have to say to another opportunity. For years I have sought and longed for this meeting. I never dreamed that it would come thus. I can be of no use to you now. My fond hope was to assist or relieve you in some way, to the sacrifice of years of time, or the whole of my estate. But I may express my shame and sorrow at the treatment you encountered from those of my blood and name, whose obligations to you were great and uncancelled. My father was not inhuman. Upon his deathbed he assured me that he was ignorant of your husband's real character and situation. His errors were, hearkening to the representations of others, and an undue anxiety to secure his debt. His surprise and grief at learning the result of his agent's severe measures were extreme. With his dying breath, he mentioned you and your wrongs. His God forgave him,

Minnie; will you cherish resentment against the dead?"

The familiar pet-name thrilled her; but she returned with tolerable steadiness—

"I have never considered him the chief instrument of our ruin."

Wilton bit his lip.

"You allude to Eleanor. She had only the extenuation of thoughtlessness, and a silly, unfounded spite, which distorted her views of right and wrong. She was a vain, spoiled girl, with strong prejudices, remaining in force to this day. I cannot say, 'pardon her,' but your meekness and charity were boundless once; cannot they cover her transgression?"

She was silent.

"Do you know this?" he asked, taking a worn letter from his pocket-book. "I did not get it for months after it was written, too late to reply to your call for immediate aid; but it expedited my return. You were gone, no one knew whither; his noble spirit was in a better, truer world."

She had retreated further into the embrasure, close against the window, and was partly concealed by the curtain; the tears were streaming fast! fast!

"I inquired and looked for you in vain, my tender nurse. The thought of his death and your destitution has been a fever-spot upon my heart, a blight upon every pleasure. My first net, as master here, was to lay Harry where I know he would have wished to sleep—at the door of his loved home, in the shade of the elms. I have sat by that grave often and again, and, reading this blurred sheet, so eloquent of affection and distress, have wept as for my brother. You believe me; do you not, Minnie?"

No answer but a stifled sob and a low moan, "Oh, Harry! Harry!"

Mournful accompaniments to the gushing music and the merry, answering beat of quick footsteps!

"I must be alone for awhile, Mr. Lisle," she said, presently, but extending her hand.

He bowed over it as he pressed it, and left her. She dropped the curtain about her, and looked, through tears, to the spangled sky. Her heart—deaf and dumb paralytic! warmed and stirred by the healing wand of true friendship—was answering, in feeble whispers, the voice of her good angel, whose teachings were of that sublimest of virtues—Forgiveness. One sentence of Wilton's stung like a scorpion-lash; Her "meekness and charity!" Was their proof to be found in her sarcastic, scathing denial of the prayer of her humbled foe; in her

deliberate consignment of three sinless babies to a life of hardship and degradation? Their mother—wicked and heartless though she had been—was Wilton's sister. Should his head be bowed yet lower for the faults of others? Would revenge restore her to the enjoyment of life and love, or make Harry's slumbers more peaceful? Thus she reasoned, with a changed spirit; and a sweet quiet stole over her with the birth of generous resolve. Her husband had never denied her a single request, and she knew that, in spite of his lofty sense of justice and truth, her intercession for his misguided nephew would be seconded by the pleadings of natural affection. Mortification and privation might be in store for the unfortunate family, but not open disgrace. Emerging from her retirement, she beheld Eleanor, within a few feet of her, talking with an excess of volubility and animation, the most superficial observer could see was forced. She did not see Mrs. De Tracy; but her hollow laugh, as she passed, sounded in the hearer's brain for years afterwards. The more she thought of it, the more she wondered at her presence there, torn, and racked, and despairing as she was. Some end was to be gained by a course so opposed to feeling. What was it? She looked around for Edward. He was nowhere to be seen; and when an hour elapsed without his re-entrance, the truth broke upon her. His wife had warned him of the impending danger; her appearance in the scene of mirth was a screen for his flight.

"Blind fool that I was not to have foreseen and prevented this!" she muttered. To fly was to trumpet his crime; and he might have—probably had departed. In nervous haste, she explored the apartments in quest of her husband. He was planted in front of a loquacious dowager, enduring, with unflinching civility, her cannonade of prosy reminiscence and anecdote. Upon ordinary occasions, no one, acquainted with his punctilios, would have ventured to interrupt the monologue; but his wife touched his shoulder, and motioned him imperatively to accompany her. On their way up stairs, she communicated her apprehensions and their cause. One impassioned supplication for his forbearance towards the wretched man made him forget his harsh sentence. None of the servants knew where he was; but one had met him going to his chamber about an hour before. The key was on the inside of the lock.

"Knock!" said the Colonel, in an undertone, to the boy.

No reply.

"Call him!"

"Mars' Edward! Mars' Edward!" vociferated the negro, growing frightened at the manner of his companions.

Not a breath or a movement.

"He has set out!" said Mrs. Do Tracy, aside. "They may know something about him at the stables."

The negro had sunk upon his knee, with a knife turned the key, and applied his eye to the crevice. His yell, as he sprang to his feet, brought a crowd to the spot. "Murder! murder!" it said, and the old Colonel fell across the threshold. They thronged up—master, and guests, and servants—the door was forced; and there, leaning back in an easy-chair, his hand clutching the bloody razor, sat the forger, his throat cut from ear to ear.

CHAPTER VI.

COLONEL DE TRACY was gathered to his fathers a year after his nephew's death. Eleanor and her children had a home at Lisle Hall; but a comfortable provision was made for them in their uncle's will. Oakwood was bequeathed to young Wilton Hazlitt, upon condition of his taking the name of De Tracy; and the widow, anxious to leave scenes fraught with such harrowing associations, removed to Baltimore. Here she had few associates, no intimates. Her interesting appearance and settled sadness excited curiosity and sympathy; but inquiries and attempted consolation were met by the same rigid reserve. Her religious duties, neglected for years, were attended to with a severe exactitude, denoting a morbid or uneasy conscience. No beggar passed her door or left her presence empty-handed; the heats of summer nor the blasts of winter caused her pew to be vacant; yet the eagerness with which she bestowed alms and went through the form of worship could not be mistaken for ostentation or devout zeal. Discovering that ease of mind was not to be bought, she chose to ascribe her dissatisfaction to the coldness and poverty of the Protestant faith, and sought balm in the bosom of the "Mother Church."

To her confessor, she unloaded her sorrowful breast; and he added penances to the propitiatory offerings to Remorse. But the "Beneditio" of his absolution failed to drown that hollow laughter and awful cry of "murder;" holy water nor incense could cleanse the blood-stain she felt resting upon her soul. Such sweets Revenge carries behind his back to cast upon the dupes he smiled on while approaching.

In her rounds of mercy she was accompanied, sometimes by a Sister of Charity; oftener by Father Rog  t, who was exceedingly proud of his proselyte; and when he could not attend her in person, not unfrequently sent, as a substitute, a guest-brother, or one of his pupils, recommending a careful imitation of this pious "sister's" works and deportment, as an invaluable aid in the improvement of their own religion and manners.

Paul Kennedy, his favorite student, was of Irish parentage; but his feet had pressed the shores of many lands. Educated for the bar, he entered the army in a boyish freak; fought the French, and afterwards, falling in love with their customs and style of life, cut no mean figure as a *suivant*-dandy in the *salons* of the metropolis; squandered his fortune in dissipation, disappeared in the smallest circles of the vortex of society, and came up on the other side of the Atlantic, a studious, self-denying candidate for holy orders. He was, at the time of our story, about thirty years of age, with an elegant person, grave, but winning address; a far-reaching, scheming brain, and a will that said "lord and master" to none—not even His Holiness.

He was to take orders in a few months, and the worthy Father was benevolently desirous that he should secure the favor of so useful a patroness as the rich and childless neophyte. His junior was not loath to make himself agreeable. In time, his powerful, acute mind acquired a mighty influence over hers, enfeebled by distress and superstition; and the sagacious superior foresaw, in this ascendancy, an additional and indissoluble chain, binding her to the One Great Cause.

My poor pen falters in the attempt to convey a faint idea of the pious scandal, the rage, the amaze, the unaffected grief of the good man, when coolly informed by his pupil that he had written to Rome, praying for a dispensation to espouse Lavinia De Tracy; and he added, irreverently: "If this reasonable petition is denied, 'Mother Church' loses two unworthy members. Mammon and Cupid *versus* stolo and cassock! what man in his senses could hesitate in the choice?"

The "reasonable petition" was negatived; but the interdict arriving but a day before the nuptials, the bride was kept in ignorance until the ceremony was over. It would be difficult to define her motives in the commission of this sacrilegious act. She had never been, at heart, a Romanist; therefore, was comparatively free from the horror with which such an alliance

would be regarded by the generality of those of that persuasion. Her loneliness and unprotected state may have had their effect in producing the change; but undoubtedly the principal cause was the mixture of fear and fascination she felt for her suitor.

Father Rog  t read, with tears, the sentence of excommunication upon the Sabbath after their union; but they were beyond the mutterings of its thunders, speeding their way towards the balmy South. They wintered in New Orleans; the ex-priest launching upon the dancing billows of gayety and extravagance with an *abandon* that testified to the irksomeness of his previous austerity. Along with other affectations, he threw off the show of tenderness and respect for his wife. Without a friend in the world, insulted daily by her only guardian, deprived of the importance with which her wealth had invested her, the meanest hireling in her household was an object of more consideration than its nominal mistress. In subsequent years, in reviewing this epoch of her history, she described her heart as a desert, above which clouds brooded forever, moving, indeed, at the breath of contention, but never passing away.

They had been married but a year, when a fresh and fruitful cause of discord presented itself. By a clause in Colonel De Tracy's will, she had a life interest (*not transferable*) in certain property. This was but an inconsiderable part of her original income, and she was astounded when told by Kennedy that it was now all they had to depend upon. With this information, commenced a system of persecution as cruel as unprovoked. Again and again she represented that she had no right to dispose of either land or slaves, and surrendered every cent transmitted by her Virginia agent; he was obstinate in the assertion that she could devise some means of evading the testamentary disposition, at least that it was her fault that the clause was inserted. His worried victim seemed, even to his indifferent eyes, to be but a pace from the tomb, when he unexpectedly stopped in before her. He met his death in a gambling-house; and when his mutilated face was uncovered to the gaze of the wife of eighteen months, her comment was in her clasped hands and fervent ejaculation—

"Thank God!"

Kind reader, I have not drawn upon my imagination to tax your credulity in setting down the leading incidents of this tale of vicissitudes. I, its veracious writer, have often, in my childhood, seen the thrice-widowed heroine

—then a calm-eyed woman, long past the meridian of life, residing, in unpretending style, in a quiet country neighborhood. Well do I remember the sensation that rustled through our little church, as she stood before the pulpit, one Communion Sabbath, and pronounced the vow to consecrate her remaining years to the service of her Saviour, a vow which, as far as man could discern, was faithfully, prayerfully kept. Upon a stormy winter night, when the heavy dash of the rain was like the tramp of mourners, the sobbing wind like the weeping of the bereaved, she related her story to a dear friend of my own, who has since joined her in the far, changeless land. She touched, unwillingly, upon her latest and most singular marriage; spoke of the second as of the phantasmagoria of a dream; but upon the wedlock of her youth, she dwelt with swimming eyes and a smile of tender remembrance.

"Except during these latter years of resignation and contentment," said she, "I have never known such happiness as when we sat in that cottage kitchen, Harry at his bench, and I, binding shoes, at his side."

TRIALS OF AN ENGLISH HOUSEKEEPER.

NO. I.—MY ANCESTOR'S PICTURE.

“ Is there a heart that never loved
Or felt soft woman's sigh ?
Is there a man can mark unmoved
Dear woman's tearful eye ?
Oh, bear him to some distant shore
Or solitary cell,
Where none but savage monsters roar—
Where love ne'er deigned to dwell !”

Popular Ballad.

It has been as wisely as beautifully remarked by the Rev. Robert Montgomery in his delightfully truthful and sweet pretty poem, entitled “Woman an Angel,” that the lovely daughters of Eve (I quote from memory, giving rather the sentiment than the words of that talented and elegant divine) were born to suffer ; for not only

have they their own severe afflictions to put up with, but they are expected also to become willing partners in those of the sons of Adam, by whom they have been led to the altar, and whose hands and fortunes they have consented to accept and share. Without lovely woman to soothe, restrain, and look after them, I should like to know what would be the fate of those impatient, obstinate, selfish, and poor helpless creatures—men ? Would they not unpick every social tie, and go about like the brutes of the fields, with scarcely a thing fit to put on, and their stockings all full of holes, a prey to their all-devouring appetites, the slaves of their ungovernable passions, and be robbed right and left

by their servants? And why, I ask, would this be the case? Why, because every woman, with her proper feelings about her, knows as well as I do that it certainly would.

Yes, lovely daughters of Eve, ours is a horrid, bitter cup! To us, the earth is truly a "Vale of Tears," without one pretty flower growing up among the shoals and quicksands that beset our briery path to gladden us on our way. Indeed, the trials of poor confiding women form a sad, sad history, and the humble individual who is now addressing the courteous reader has her share of them.

As I was sitting alone one evening by the fire pondering over them, a brilliant idea rushed across my brain. Should I act upon it? I hesitated. But reflecting that I might be the proud means of aiding hundreds of my fellow-creatures, I no longer doubted, but determined to publish to the world all my long experience with servants of all kinds and countries, so that I might, as it were, become the pilot of young wives, to steer their fragile little barks through the rocks and precipices of domestic life, and prevent their happiness being wrecked, as mine has been, I may say, at my own fireside.

I pass over my marriage to Mr. Edward Skinston and the happy honeymoon, which we spent in lodgings near Brighton. Well do I remember that precious time when, arm in arm, we would wander for whole hours together in our buff slippers along the golden sands, talking (alas, blind mortals!) of the happiness which we thought was never to end. All was beautiful and bright, and seemed to us like a fairy dream. But I was recalled to a sense of my new and responsible position by a letter from my dear mother, informing me that, after seeing, she should say, forty servants, she had succeeded in finding the treasure she had been seeking for me; and she had engaged for me a respectable middle-aged woman, who brought with her a high character from her last place. She was neat, even-tempered, an early riser, a good plain cook, and a devout Christian, honest, industrious, and sober; in short, a perfect treasure. She had arranged, she wrote, to have the maid in our house a few days before our return, that we might find all prepared for our reception.

I had read my dear mamma's epistle to my husband, and he remarked that he was sure it was very kind of her indeed to put herself to so much trouble on our behalf, though he hurt my feelings by adding that he thought it might contribute more to my happiness hereafter if she were to be restrained from taking quite so active an interest in our domestic affairs for the future;

for, during all his experience, he had remarked that relations by marriage agreed much better the less they saw of one another.

This observation of his cut me to the heart, and filled me with strange, melancholy forebodings.

Soon after we had received this intelligence, we left the place where we had spent so many happy days for our new home.

When we drove up to the door early in the evening, I was greatly alarmed, and not a little surprised, to find the door answered by my dear mamma, for I was convinced that she knew her station in life too well ever to dream of doing such a thing unless compelled by some calamity. Edward seemed to be as much annoyed as myself, and wondered why my dear mamma could not let the servant attend to the door. But alas, we soon learned the news which was to welcome us home!

About three that afternoon, my kind mamma had taken the trouble to come over to see that all was comfortable against our arrival. She had knocked and waited nearly half an hour without making any one in the house hear her. She grew extremely alarmed, thinking that perhaps the house had been stripped; and she told us that no one could imagine the horrid ideas that passed through her mind. At last, she borrowed a pair of steps from next door, and with extreme difficulty, and almost peril, entered by the parlor window.

Down in the kitchen, she found the maid lying on her back on the rug before the fire in a state of complete insensibility, while our best linen sheets were hanging on the horse burnt to perfect rags, so that they could not even be cut up into glass-cloths; and it was a mercy, she said, that we did not come home to find our house a mass of black smouldering ruins.

It was a fit of epilepsy, mamma said, which had brought the woman into this state, and the lively picture she drew of her sufferings filled my heart with pity. But Edward was so surly at the place being so uncomfortable, with everything topsy-turvy, and no fire, and nothing in the house to eat, that he kept banging the things about in a way I had not thought he would do so soon after his marriage, and I could not help being hurt (though I thought best not to show it) at the strong want of feeling he displayed upon hearing an account of the girl's affliction; for he did not hesitate to say that he would forfeit his head if the fits did not turn out to be fits of drunkenness, calling the girl, to our great horror, "a gin-drinking thing."

The next morning, Mary came to me, with her eyes full of tears, to apologize for her drunk-

eness, while I, in my simplicity, imagined that she was speaking to me about her fits. She hoped I would look over it this time, as she did not mean to get in the same state again, on which I told the creature that it was no fault of hers, as it must be plain to every rightly constituted mind that she could have no control over herself in that respect. She said trouble had brought it upon her, and that it came over her so strong at times that she had no power to stand up against it, all which, I told her, was very natural, and I actually was stupid enough to tell her that whenever she felt the fit coming on, not to attempt to check it, but to let it have its due course, and that, if she would come to me, I would gladly give her whatever she might take a fancy to.

Mary went on pretty well for a day or two, when we noticed that she began to get rather confused in her intellects, so that she hardly seemed to know what she was about, and kept breaking everything she put her hands upon. I, in my innocence, began to fear that another fit was coming on, and I should be having the woman laid up insensible on my "at home" day, and a nice situation I should be in then. So, with my usual good nature, I asked her if she would take anything, and whether she thought a little brandy would put her straight, on which, the deceitful thing began to see through my mistake, and to understand that I was treating her for fits instead of drunkenness, and said that she was sure I was very good, and that she would try a glass; and she actually had the face to beg another one that same evening, saying that the first had done her a world of good. So that there was I, encouraging the horrid wretch in the worst of vices; and, as I heard afterwards, she went about the neighborhood, saying that it was no fault of hers, and that I took a delight in making her tipsy.

On that very evening, dear mamma stepped down to tell us about a splendid present she had been preparing for us. This was a valuable old painting of her ancestor, Fitzhiggins, who is said to have come into England with the Conqueror. As I was her only child, she regarded me as the heir to this great relic, and wished me to have it put up in some part of my house where it would be always before my eyes, and be continually reminding me of my station in life, and that the noble blood of a Fitzhiggins flowed in my veins. Mamma had had our ancestor cleaned and varnished, for she said a good deal of the nobility that was in his face was lost from its being so dirty; and now that he was in a new frame, she said, the dear man looked perfectly

elegant. She was in tremendous spirits about it, and told Edward that it was an ornament that she knew she did wrong in not presenting to the British Museum, for that a descendant of that very family had been Mayor of Norwich three times running. And though Edward did not entertain the same elevated opinion of the Fitzhigginses as my mamma did, and had even once gone so far as to call our gracious William the Conqueror, and his noble knights, a set of vagabond robbers, still, on this occasion, he behaved himself like a perfect gentleman, and only said "he should hardly believe it."

A little after eight, the young man who had been doing up the picture came round with it; and when we saw our noble ancestor, we could not help remarking what a fine head it was, and that any one, to look at him, might tell from the likeness that he was related to our family. I wished that it should be hung in our drawing-room, to show Edward's friends that he had not married an ordinary person, and prove to them that our family were not mere mushrooms.

So, Edward and myself went to the top of the stairs with the candles, while that good-for-nothing creature, Mary (whom, I'm sure, we none of us suspected of being in liquor at the time) helped the young man up with the picture, and mamma went behind, that she might take care that it was not grazed against the banisters, and kept telling Mary to mind what she was about, for that she would not have anything happen to it for all she was worth. Mary, who was in advance, and, therefore, obliged to come up stairs backwards, went on very well until she had nearly reached the first landing, when, one of the stair-rods being out, the carpet was loose, and we were horrified by seeing Mary's feet slip from under her, while the drunken thing let go her hold of the picture to save herself from falling.

But what with the liquor she had taken secretly, and that I had given her that afternoon, and coming up stairs backwards, she lost all command over herself, so that, after making one or two vain attempts to keep her balance, we saw her, with horror, pitched head first into the middle of our noble ancestor, at the same time knocking backwards the young man, who would, I am sure, have been killed on the spot if he had not broken his fall by tumbling right on dear mamma, who was fortunately not more than half a dozen stairs from the bottom; and they all three fell right into the hall, amidst the screams of my mother, the crashing of the frame of our noble ancestor, and (I regret to add) the laughter of my husband. I immediately rushed to poor

mamma's assistance, confidently believing that she had not a sound limb in her body; but, I am happy to say, she was only dreadfully bruised, and that indeed no one was seriously hurt by the fall but our noble ancestor, from whom my mamma dated her descent, and who was literally broken to bits. My poor mamma thought little of her own sufferings, but when she saw the head of her family all knocked in, as it were, her grief knew no bounds.

My husband, I am ashamed to say, did not seem at all affected by mamma's distress, but, as soon as we were in the parlor alone, observed, with a sarcastic smile that I could have shaken him for, "what a pity it was that the poor girl, Mary, should be so subject to fits!"

On which my mother burst out, saying: "Fits, indeed! She never saw such fits. It was nothing more nor less than downright drunken-

ness, that it was; and how she could ever have been so imposed on, she could not say, but that it had all come upon her like a thunderbolt immediately after she saw the girl staggering up the stairs, and that indeed, to tell the truth, she had had her suspicions before, and that on the day of our arrival from Brighton, it struck her that there was a strong smell of spirits in the house, but which, at the time, she had attributed to the French polish of the new furniture."

I can assure the reader that, if I had not felt that I was in the girl's power, from our "at home" day being so near at hand, when it would never do to be without some one to open the door, I could have bundled the creature into the streets that very hour. But I thought it best to treat her civilly a few days longer, and the reader will see with what base ingratitude my forbearance was repaid.



THE MILLINER'S DREAM; OR, THE WEDDING-BONNET.

BY ALICE B. NEAL.

(See Plate.)

"SOMETHING entirely unique—you understand?" said Miss Costar to the obsequious Frenchwoman at her side.

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"Plenty of blonde, you know; a *demi-voile* perhaps, and rose-buds and orange-blossoms inside and out; the whole thing light as possible," added Mrs. Costar.

"Yes, madame."

"And the shape; let it be as new and elegant as possible. Have you the last *Moniteur*? There's something in *that* style!"

"That is *velours espingle*, madame, our heaviest material."

"Oh, but that need make no difference, you know! It's the style, not the material; crape, of course."

"*Mais*, madame"—

"No buts, I beg; there's a good creature; and send in the whole of your bill at once, the travelling-hat and all. And ten, at latest, recollect; the ceremony is punctually at twelve, and the Newport boat leaves an hour earlier this week."

"Permit me, mademoiselle," said the bland Madame Millefleurs, touching the brim of the bonnet worn by the haughty-looking bride elect, and shaping it habitually and rapidly with her practised fingers.

"Oh, it's not of the slightest consequence how I look to-day!" she said, coldly. "The carriage-blinds are down, and no one would dream of seeing me out, at any rate. It is only the disappointment—the *fear* of disappointment, I should say—that brought me out at all."

Miss Costar had caught a warning look from her maternal relative. Madame Millefleurs, in anticipation of "her whole bill," and the respectable addition which she intended the wedding-bonnet should prove, did not think best to see it in the tall cheval glass before which she stood, or to be assured that some great disappointment was the occasion of her being consulted, literally at the eleventh hour, on an affair so important as the wedding-hat, when the *trousseau* of the bride had been the subject of conversation and speculation in her own circle for two months past; in fact, ever since her engagement to Au-

gustus Brevont had been announced. Truth was, the steamer by which the ordered gem of French millinery was expected had not even been telegraphed up to the present hour, and while wives and mothers began to give place to uneasy thought as to the safety of their household treasures, Mrs. Costar and her daughter had wearied the patience of the male members of the family by incessant questions and wonderings, and mourning over the non-arrival of the Humboldt—now in her fifteenth day—from Havre.

Miss Costar would willingly have put off the wedding, only for her mother's representations of "how people would talk." Not that she was to be married in the bonnet! It was to be a full-dress wedding at Grace Church, under the superintendence of the immortal BROWNE; a full-dress wedding, with a real Brussels veil, and six bridesmaids, and carriages enough in attendance to block up the whole square. But then, there was the first appearance at Newport to be considered, and it would never do to leave New York, trusting to the probable arrival of the steamer, and the possible fidelity of Adams & Co.

It is just possible that the elated bridegroom, then inspecting for the last time the elegant suit of diamonds at Tiffany's before their transient seclusion in the rich satin-lined cases provided for them, might have considered his plans and wishes of some consequence, of *more* than a bonnet, if he had been consulted. Fortunately, he did not know how nearly they were jeopardized, or that he passed his charming bride of the morrow in the commonplace livery-stable establishment, with the curtains down, which was just leaving Madame Millefleurs' door as he stepped out upon the pavement. Not even he, supposed to be the sharer of every anxiety, and repository of all secrets, great and small, was to know that the fashionable Miss Costar sinned so far against conventional rule as to be "out" on the day preceding her wedding. BROWNE would have freely entered into her feelings as she shrank back into the corner, and threw a blue *barège* veil over her face instead of eagerly arresting him as she recognized his colored coat and cinna-

mon-colored gloves; he, BROWN, would hardly have undertaken the affair after such an *exposé*, in consideration of his reputation, and *Martel* might be pardoned for refusing to dress her hair if it ever should get abroad.

But leaving Miss Costar to make her escape to the regions of Fourteenth Street as best she may, our interests recall us to the private room of Madame Millefleurs' large establishment, which she had just quitted; and here we find the patient-looking shop-girl, who has been a witness of the whole interview from behind the muslin curtains, in deep consultation with her employer.

"You hear, mademoiselle; it must be done by ten, at latest, to-morrow morning."

"Impossible," began Mademoiselle Alice.

The look, which was all the reply she received, recalled to her mind the quick determination with which Madame Millefleurs kept the work-room in order, the really high wages which she received, and the difficulty of procuring another situation at this season of the year. So, she stood still again to hear.

"Mademoiselle Alice understands. It is necessary; it must be accomplished. It will be done; a triumph, if you please, mademoiselle, a *chef-d'œuvre*—all grace, and lightness, and elegance; a miracle of art, in fact," added the incautious madame, forgetting for an instant, in the presence of her assistant, what by long practice she never suffered to escape before a customer, that she was Madame Millefleurs, the celebrated Parisian artiste, and not Miss Flower, the driving New York milliner, originally of Division Street. The foreign shrug and accent had done wonders for "madame."

It was three o'clock on a stifling August day, to be sure, and Alice Leary, whose exquisite taste and skill had promoted her to the head of the work-room, had been busily employed since early breakfast in directing, arranging, urging, and checking the careless idlers already at work on the fall importations for the early September opening, strength, patience, and invention alike exhausted. Besides, it was Wednesday, and Wednesday evening *somebody* always came to walk home with her from the shop, and talk over certain plans and prospects they had in common, though, to be sure, they were a long way from being realized.

Somehow, they seemed further off and more hopeless than ever when she returned to her niche in the work-room, and tried to fix her mind on the unexpected and unwelcome task. The sun glared so from the white marble front of the opposite range of stores; the air so hot

and dusty; the roll of carriages, drays, and omnibuses, the ring of feet and voices from the pavement below, so deafening and incessant! She turned over the delicate materials which she had wearily gathered around her, hoping in vain that the gauze crape or half-blown orange-blossoms would suggest one original thought or even arrangement of a trimming for this "miracle of art;" but it was all in vain. Her mind would wander; her fingers only reproduced ideas already wrought out in every material and color. It was very hard certainly to be so at the beck and nod of an exacting task-mistress, who never seemed to have any scruples with regard to truth, or, in fact, to the employment of every atom of time, strength, and cleverness she considered bound to her, or made over to her for the sum of four dollars weekly. Eighteen or twenty dollars would be the very least Madame Millefleurs would think of charging for the bonnet, which she would never have in her hand except to criticize. The materials might cost seven or eight. Where was the justice of such gains? And then the bride, Miss Costar; the young milliner had often seen her before, and had heard of little else of late from their customers in the same circle, until she was familiar with all her plans and possessions, and knew that from the time she had been the spoiled tyrant of the nursery nothing had ever seemed denied to her by fate or fortune. There had been no obstacle to *her* marriage, this bright creature of fashion! No sick mother or little sister to provide for; no hoards to be slowly accumulated before the two rooms could be taken and scantily furnished for the home so far off, yet so longed and toiled for. This other maiden had but to speak, and love and luxury awaited her, an endless prospect of unalloyed happiness. Yet Alice, as she glanced to the little oval mirror, knew that her own face was not less lovely in its clear oval outline, shaded by luxuriant bands of soft black hair, and her figure, slight and stooping as it was, had no less grace and elegance in reality, though owing nothing to the gray stuff dress and black silk apron which she always wore.

It was discontent that whispered in her heart now as she leaned forward wearily, only conscious of the murmur of voices in the adjoining room, the noise and glare of the street below, her strained, exhausted fancy, and "a dim, dilating pain," sure precursor of one of those racking headaches that care, and confinement, and incessant application had made habitual, but not the less dreaded.

So it was, that, notwithstanding the hot afternoon sun journeyed on, and her task was as yet

scarcely commenced, the exhausted girl fell asleep, pursued even in dreams by her waking thoughts. Goblin bonnets of every age and shape flitted before her, and jeered her lack of invention. They floated their tags and streams gayly in her face; they peered curiously at her from over her shoulder, or, joining hands, danced through the air in mocking pantomime.

"Nothing new, nothing new," seemed to be the burden of their mimic shapes and gestures, while a crushed, frayed, and faded apparition, arrayed in a mode long since forgotten, whispered in a shrill, melancholy voice—

"All is vanity and vexation of spirit."

And while the rest of the goblin shapes chattered and danced around her, Alice seemed to be looking into a vision, as it were, of the real life of the young girl she had so envied. The wedding-day had come; the rich toilets, the glittering pageantry of the ceremony all passed before her; but with this new gift of sight, there was visible to her the frivolity of thoughts that then, if ever, should have been turned heavenward, as the solemn vows for life or death were pronounced, and the heartless mockery of the congratulations offered with smiling faces, and hearts full of envy and detraction. The very bride, and the new-made husband so little realizing the new relation in which they stood to each other and the world; she still dreaming of admiration and conquest, an undisturbed reign as heretofore, to which his wealth and position were to minister; and he deceiving himself with a belief in his own sincerity of purpose, as he vowed to "love and cherish," to leave all others for her sake. That it would be resting upon them to make these promises true through evil as well as good report—through poverty, sickness, and death,

"For the house and grave,
And for something higher"—

seemed never to have deepened loving tones or looks between them, or even to thrill their hearts now, sweeping from before the altar back to the world for which both had lived heretofore, the selfish, aimless lives of those who have never known want or care, or the chastening of even household sorrows.

"So she saw in her dream," as did the chronicler of the good pilgrim of old. How the fair, unclouded future changed and darkened before them! That each grew secretly to weary of the bonds they had so lightly assumed, and then how the stream of their life divided into two separate channels of interest and occupation! They who never learned the meaning of the word *home* ceased even to respect its sanctity, and upbraid-

ing took the place of flattery; neglect followed the wilful exactions and senseless homage of courtship. The world gave censure for congratulation, and the end was doubt, distrust, and openly acknowledged dissension. Luxury and boundless leisure palled instead of satisfying, and the husband found abroad the interest, and at least apparent, sympathy that he looked for in vain in the society of his wife.

Then the little withered figure drew near again, and whispered her old burden: "*Vanity and vexation of spirit.*"

But the dream, and the spectres of the fashion of this world long since passed away, vanished together as a gentle, yet strong hand was laid upon her shoulder, and she raised her head, startled and bewildered, to find twilight already come, the hum from the work-room hushed. The street lamps threw a fitful light upon the dainty materials gathered before her, reminding her, with a sudden start, of the yet unattempted task, and the disastrous train of consequences that would be sure to follow any disappointment.

But nothing was a hardship with those dear eyes looking down into her own, yet troubled and dreary in expression, while that deep voice chid her for the careless exposure of health so necessary to *his* life and happiness.

Yes, it was Wednesday evening, and *somebody* had come to walk with her through the now cool and more quiet streets to the home whose comforts were of her own earning, and where her presence was a blessing. The threatened headache was dispelled by the sauntering walk in the coolness of the evening air, and Alice could lean on that strong arm, and talk merrily of her dream and the gay wedding of to-morrow, though she would have to be at the shop by daylight to make up for lost time. How fortunate that she had the key!

And then they subsided upon their never-ending plans for the future, and she heard that he had great hopes of a most important advance to his slender salary, which would shorten their probation by years perhaps, and she must let him share in the pleasant task of caring for the invalid mother and the delicate little sister.

"Both shall be welcome in *our home*," he said, with a lingering, loving emphasis on those last words, that told how long and how fondly they had looked forward to sharing it together.

The words and the tone came back many a time the next busy morning as the young milliner's slender hands fluttered among the pure laces, and ribbons, and blossoms of which she shaped the wedding-bonnet, and, if their loving

cadence could have been inwrought, no fairer,
purer fancy could have been embodied than that
which was triumphantly carried to madame in
the appointed season, and *almost* consoled the
bride for the non-arrival of the long-watched-
for steamer.

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THE SYMPATHY MEETING.

BY MARION HARLAND, AUTHOR OF "MARRYING THROUGH PRUDENTIAL MOTIVES," "THE THRICE WEDDED," AND THE NOVEL OF "ALONE."

"There 's a chield amang you takin' notes,
And, faith, he'll prent 'em."

"I HAD a call from your friend Mrs. Parks, this morning," said Mrs. Cushman to her husband, who had lingered to chat with her for half an hour after their boarding-house dinner. The honey-moon was hardly over, which fact may account for this extraordinary procedure on his part.

"Indeed," he rejoined, with an appearance of great interest, and added that most stupid, yet most natural of questions, which everybody asks and nobody likes to answer, "What did she say?"

"Oh, she was very pleasant, although she did not stay long. She only came to invite us to take tea with her this evening. I told her that I would go with pleasure, if you had no engagement to prevent your accompanying me."

"Of course, I am at your service. All engagements, precontracts, etc., are null and void when they stand in the way of your happiness."

"Come, George," interrupted the little lady, laughingly, pulling his ear just the least bit in the world, "you need not trouble yourself to make fine speeches to me *now*. Can you go or not?"

"So you call my expressions of devotion 'fine speeches!' What language shall I employ to convince you that I am ready, willing, and anxious to attend you? First, because you desire it. Secondly, Parks gives elegant suppers, and oysters are just in season; his cook has not an equal in the Union at a 'scallop' or 'stew.' Thirdly, Mrs. Parks matronized me in my celibacy, and I am desirous that she should see how well I have practised her thousand and one rules for selecting a wife, since mine has a virtue for each!"

"There, do stop, Parson Poundtext! you have got around to the point from whence you started. The party is to be small, and we ladies are to go, unceremoniously, with our work, early in the afternoon."

"An unceremonious afternoon!" repeated the provoking husband, slowly. "What *does* that mean, Lizzie?"

"George, your nonsense would vex a saint." But such she certainly was not, for she laughed

heartily. "What a flow of spirits he has!" she said, as she saw him from the window lift his hat to her before he turned the corner. "I can never be gloomy in his presence, the dear fellow!"

When Mrs. Cushman and her unceremonious work-bag made their *entrée* into Mrs. Parks's parlor, they found most of the afternoon guests already there. Our heroine's reception was flatteringly cordial; and she was speedily working and chatting quite at her ease, casting, meanwhile, well-bred glances at the rest of the company. She had seen nearly all before at her "reception," or when returning her bridal calls. There was but one stranger, and her name, "Oram," did not seem new to her. She was still young, and retained traces of striking beauty, shadowed by a pensiveness that betokened sorrow or ill-health. Mrs. Cushman's seat was next to hers; and even her manner of paying the compliments of the day, trite and commonplace in the mouths of most people, evinced a desire to contribute to her enjoyment. They were like old acquaintances in ten minutes. Mrs. Oram became more silent as the others joined in; and when, at length, they took the lead in the conversation, she spoke only at long intervals, as if to show that she was not selfishly inattentive. The news of the day was summarily disposed of by the dozen busy tongues. The new-style bonnet was pronounced "shockingly unbecoming" to all but young and pretty faces, yet it appeared that each one present had either procured, or intended to purchase one; and those baggy incumbrances, by a fashionable misnomer called "oriental" sleeves, which officiate as spoon, ladle, or broom, as coffee, soup, or dust come within their sweep, were voted to be "exceedingly graceful and pleasant, especially in summer." One lady, who looked as if she might have been "literary," affirming that they "gave quite a classic appearance to the figure." The crochet-mat, then in Mrs. Cushman's hands, was next admired, and several polite applications made for the pattern.

"I am passionately fond of such work," said Mrs. Harris, examining the iris-hued network; "but, with my large family, recreation of any description is out of the question."

"When do you expect to get into your new house, Mrs. Cushman?" inquired Mrs. Parks.

"Before long, I hope. I am very tired of boarding."

"Do you really prefer housekeeping?" asked Mrs. Harris.

"She has never tried it yet," said another, significantly. "She will change her tune in less than a month, and wish herself back in her boarding-house."

"I think not, Mrs. Lane. I am domestic in my tastes, and have a positive liking for what is generally termed the labor of keeping an establishment in order."

"You are inexperienced. You do not know what you are bringing upon yourself. When boarding, you can live just as you did while single; no bother about servants and dirt. Your husband comes in to a good dinner, over which you have not been puzzled and heated; the house is clean from bottom to top—you never think how it is kept so; you have but to sew, visit, and enjoy yourself. I have tried both ways of living. Take my advice: rent out your house, stay where you are, and don't fly into trouble before it comes to you."

Lizzie thought of the snug dwelling George had exhibited such taste in preparing for her, and was emboldened to reply, half proudly—

"Indeed, I have no fears. As to inexperience, I have kept my father's house ever since my fifteenth year, and should never have resigned the charge, but for my marriage."

"Ah, you will find this a different affair. Husbands and fathers are not alike easily satisfied."

Again, George came to Lizzie's aid. She contrasted his indulgent good-nature with her father's fastidiousness and capricious notice of whatever she did.

"I should imagine that a husband would be more apt to overlook the imperfections of a novice than a parent, who considers it his duty to correct every fault."

"My dear Mrs. Cushman," exclaimed Mrs. Merry, blue-eyed and rosy-cheeked, who was called "Annie" by all, and seemed to be a universal pet, "you never were more mistaken in your life. But I don't wonder; I was as silly once. I married as soon as I quitted school, with my head full of the noble, long holiday I was going to have. There was something grand in the idea of being the head of a family, the lady of the house; and I coaxed Arthur to settle at once. He suggested renting until we should have made the experiment; but I told him that I was not to be hauled from pil-

lar to post in that way. I wanted to live and die in the home to which I had gone as a bride. This and a deal more stuff pleased him so much, that he went to great expense in buying and fitting up a perfectly new building in one of the best situations in town. We took possession on our return from the wedding-tour. My toy was very entertaining for a week or two. Everything was so new and pretty; the servants were upon their good behavior; Mr. Merry ditto; and I anxious to give satisfaction. But, somehow, things began to get a little awry. I could not worry myself to death with the servants. They had their orders. Was I to waste time and patience in following them about, to see that they did their work? If it was not done, I should find it out soon enough; and, if they obeyed, there was no use in watching them. Then Arthur got cross. Instead of, as at first, praising my management upon all occasions, he said nothing about it when others were by, and gave me what he called a 'few gentle hints' when we were alone. 'Gentle,' indeed! 'Twas downright scolding. 'Matters would go more smoothly if I gave them my personal superintendence.' It was my 'duty to be at home at such and such hours' (that is, when he was there); 'the servants were wasteful and slovenly, and I too negligent of their misdoings.' For a while, I did not suspect what he was at. I had no idea that he wanted me buried alive, though I knew that some men would gladly be widowers even on these terms. He always wound up by being wonderfully good and affectionate, 'to allay,' he said, 'any feeling of vexation at being what I might consider reprov'd,' and I could not get angry. But just let me tell you of a little scene that took place when we had been married about six months. You must know that my most intimate friend, Ginnie Hubbard, lived just opposite to us. We had been schoolmates, and changed our names upon the same day; so it was natural and proper that we should be together a great deal. Now, Ginnie had more spirit in the tip of her little finger than I have in my whole body, and, as Mr. Hubbard was easy-tempered, they got along swimmingly. Arthur said she was a capital housewife; but I don't believe she knew any more about cookery than I did. Only that's the way with men; they will praise any man's wife, if, by so doing, they can get a chance to disparage their own. Well, as I was saying, I loved Ginnie very dearly, and one cloudy afternoon, when I did not dare to walk far from home, I ran over to sit an hour with her. Mr. Hubbard was out of town, and she very lone-

some, and overjoyed to see me. We talked and sewed until dark, when I said I must really go home.

"Oh, no," said Ginnie; "these winter afternoons are so short. It is only six o'clock. Only think, Rosa Grant is to be married!"

"Rosa was another school-fellow; and this led us to a long confab about old times and old friends, until I was astonished to see tea brought in.

"You must stay!" said Ginnie. "You can go after our supper is done, and be in time to give Mr. Merry his."

"This was true, for Arthur often stayed out until eight or nine. I make no pretensions to sense (I believe Arthur thinks I have none); but I knew that it was not polite to run off the instant I left the table; and Ginnie commenced telling me a rigmarole about a man who had shot himself, or his wife, I forget which. After I thought a decent time had elapsed, I peeped at my watch, and you won't believe me when I tell you that it was after ten. Ginnie held a light in her porch until she saw me safe in mine, then she called out 'Good-night!' and went in. I opened the front door. The entry was dark. That stupid Bob had not lighted the lamp; he always wants to be told to do it. I looked into the front parlor, it was like midnight; and, nearly breaking my neck by falling over a chair, I groped my way to the door of the other room. One solitary, forlorn candle was on the mantle-piece, the fender was covered with ashes and cinders, and there was not a living coal in the grate. Arthur was marching back and forth across the floor. Men always do that when they are out of humor. He stopped, and looked at me.

"Good-evening," said I.

"So you have come!" said he.

"I put out my hand towards the bell-rope.

"Stay!" said he. "What do you want?"

"Some coal," I replied, bridling up.

"You may spare yourself the trouble of ringing. There is none in the house, and it will be stormy in the morning. Why was I not apprised of this in time to send some up?"

"How was I to know anything about it?"

"Robert says he told you of it last night," he answered, sternly.

"I could not deny this, although I had not thought of it since. He resumed his promenade, and gave me time for reflection. What was the cause of all this fuss? I had spent an evening with a friend. If he had seen fit to stay out until twelve; instead of ten o'clock, it would be no concern of mine, he would say;

but I was to be treated like a child that deserved a whipping. My spirit was fairly up; so I said—

"What has happened to put you in such an amiable mood?"

"He did not reply immediately; but, after two or three more strides across the room, he stalked up to me.

"You are pleased to sneer, and I shall not attempt to move your sympathies in behalf of one who, after battling all day in the world, fondly expected something like comfort at home."

"That was the text, and you never heard such a 'scorcher' as followed. I say 'never heard;' but you will, if you go to housekeeping, and forget, while talking with one you love, that you have the pantry keys in your pocket, and a famishing, fuming husband at home. I asked why he did not send for me?"

"And have it reported all over the country that my wife cannot leave the house for an hour without being summoned to wait upon me! No; if your sense of duty does not induce you to attend to your household, my commands shall not."

"Then he went out, banging the door after him; and I sat down upon the rug to have a comfortable cry all to myself. I had not shed more than a dozen tears before he came in again.

"Annie, you must not sit here in the cold. Go up stairs!"

"And I had to obey. I have learned since not to regard these little *contretemps*. If Mr. Merry begins to rail, I leave him with the walls for listeners. All husbands are tyrants, and mine is no worse than most people's."

It was impossible to listen gravely as she rattled off this story with the mimicry and gesture of a spoiled child. So winning did she appear, as she looked up from her low seat in the corner, that it must have been a callous heart which could not find, in her youth and beauty, excuse for the thoughtlessness that in her seemed scarcely to deserve the name of fault.

"Hush, child!" said a middle-aged lady, with an affectation of reproof. "Be thankful that your husband loves his home. You would find it much worse if he sought his enjoyment elsewhere. Now, there's Mr. Sherman; he has an engagement for every evening in the week. I believe he is a member of all the societies that ever were set on foot."

"He is very active in all projects for doing good, I know," responded Mrs. Parks.

"So people say; but, for my part, I think it is the duty of married men to stay at home and take care of their families. I am jealous of

these new-fangled enterprises. I cannot forgive them for usurping my place. No poor wife can call them 'benevolent organizations.' I never inquire where he is going, if he asks to have an early supper. He drinks his tea scalding hot, seizes his hat, and is off. I put the children to bed, and then sit alone all the long evening, shaking with fright if the wind rattles the windows. I dare not sleep, and am too nervous to read or sew. Every burglar in the city knows that I am a lone, unprotected woman; and this keeps me in nightly dread of housebreakers. Besides this, I am wretched lest some ruffian should attack him in the unfrequented lanes, through which he passes at all hours of the night."

"Oh, horrible!" cried Mrs. Cushman, who was of a very timorous disposition. "Why do you not entreat him to stay with you?"

"Ah, my dear, those times are over now. If I had been married only as many weeks as I have years, I might hope to be heard; but one gets used to refusals in ten years."

"I *never* should get used to them!" thought Lizzie; and the crochet-needle grew to twice its usual size, as if seen through a magnifying lens.

"You have one consolation, Mrs. Sherman," said Mrs. Lane; "you have everything your own way indoors. Mr. Sherman does not pretend to interfere with or condemn your arrangements. As for my husband, he begins to quarrel so soon as he gets within sight of the house. 'Is anybody dead, that the blinds are all shut? The house feels like a vault. It is enough to give a man the blues to come into such a dungeon!' Or, if they are open, 'How long since you opened a tavern? It is no fault of yours, if your neighbors' curiosity is not gratified.' I slave all the morning in the hope of eating one dinner in peace; but no! If I were to put the only rickety chair on the premises in the attic, under lock and key, the plaguy thing would contrive to be the first on which he sat. The child who has been latest at the sweetmeats, or who has the most ragged apron, is invariably first to meet him. Either of these circumstances upsets him completely; and, once wrong, heaven and earth cannot set him right. He looks over the dinner-table in search of something out of order, before he will taste a mouthful. 'Tom, where are the salt-spoons?' And, before the boy can bring them, up he jumps, and snatching them from him, throws them the whole length of the table. 'Zounds, madam, I should think that I have enough to do out of doors without housekeeping!' If he is particu-

larly crabbed, he will not be waited upon, but shoves his chair back and helps himself, especially if what he wants is at the other end of the room. I have been dreadfully mortified, when we have had company, by his going out to the hydrant for a pitcher of water, while we were in the midst of dinner, the servants standing by doing nothing. Then the soup is 'dish-water;' the fish 'as raw as when it was taken out of the river;' the turkey 'might as well be stuffed with cotton.' Sunday is worst of all! He has nothing to do between sermons but growl. The Sabbath evening lecture is upon the evils of my housewifery, ending with, 'There is not an Irish laborer in the United States who lives in such a pig-sty as I do!'"

Lizzie's eyes had dilated more and more as each relation progressed, and now her mouth shared in their expansion. If Mesdames Merry and Sherman had astounded, Mrs. Lane's harangue shocked her. Its very homeliness lent it force. It sounded like unvarnished truth. She had never conceived of such brutality. Already her well-appointed cottage was reft of half its charms. There were more things in housekeeping than had been dreamed of in her philosophy.

This appeared to be a regular "experience meeting." Mrs. Harris next took the floor.

"These are but minor troubles, after all; annoying, but resulting in no serious consequences."

"I don't know what you call 'serious consequences,'" retorted Mrs. Lane, "if having one's life fretted out of her by inches be not one."

"That is disagreeable, I grant; but what is it compared with the pain a mother experiences when seeing her children in the road to ruin without power to arrest them? I have no more control over mine than you have; indeed, not so much, for they might stand in awe of a stranger. Mr. Harris neither corrects them nor allows me to do so. It 'breaks their spirit,' he says. My life is a scene of perpetual discord and disturbance. Archibald, my oldest boy, respects my lowest menial more than he does his mother. When only five years old, he would return my caresses with blows. I endeavored to chastise him but once, and he nearly destroyed the sight of my right eye, besides reducing to shreds a superb lace dress cap. His father upholds him in his unnatural rebellion."

"Take care," interposed Mrs. Parks, who had been visibly uneasy for some time; "Mrs. Cushman will not thank us for teaching her to borrow trouble. We must not abuse husbands too much."

"Where 's the harm in telling her the truth?"

asked Mrs. Merry, opening her great blue eyes in comic inquiry. "I don't want her to be disappointed, as she will be, if she goes on thinking that married life is the height of happiness. It is well the novels stop when the characters are all paired off. They would spoil the story by repeating the quarrels that follow."

"You are a silly girl, Annie. Who, do you think, believes you?"

"Why, Mrs. Cushman here (let me call you Lizzie) will remember all that I have told her some of these days. I shall make you a visit of condolence. We shall be sisters in affliction."

"I hope never to have occasion to make you such a call, Mrs. Cushman," said Mrs. Oram, kindly; "but I owe you an apology for having delayed until now a visit which it was my wish as well as my duty to pay. Mr. Oram and myself are under many obligations to Mr. Cushman's generous friendship. This, of itself, would create a desire to cultivate your acquaintance. My babe has been sick ever since your arrival amongst us, and I could not have left her this afternoon, but for the offer of my sister to take the place of nurse for a few hours. It is now time for my return. We shall meet soon, I hope."

Lizzie responded heartily. Her interest in her new friend was redoubled, now that she knew her to be her husband's also. If Mrs. Parks really wished to turn the conversation, her first observation after Mrs. Oram's departure was unfortunate.

"Has Mr. Prescott recovered entirely from his attack of pneumonia?" she asked of one of her visitors.

"Thank you, he is apparently well; still I am not easy about him. Gentlemen are so imprudent. They consider proper precautions against cold or damp as womanly weakness. I have tried again and again to induce James to wear a fur-lined over-coat since his illness, but he only 'pshaw' and asks if I take him to be a sickly woman. I wish that he was. I could manage him then. He has a great horror of appearing to be ruled by me. The doctor advised him to tie a worsted comforter over his mouth when in the open air. He put it on one morning, but had not gone two squares before he met John Burton, who wanted to know if 'his wife thought he had lived long enough, that she had muffled up his respiratory organs in that style, or was it a gag to prevent his talking to the girls?' He has never touched the comforter since, giving, as his reason for discarding it, that it is hot and inconvenient; but I

know very well that it is nothing in the world but John's ridicule."

The duskiess of the room had put a stop to manual employment, and Lizzie thought with dismay of the impetus tongues would receive from this cessation. She anticipated nothing less than a declaration of an exterminating war against the other sex, should the indignation of these maltreated slaves continue to ferment. She was relieved, and the seditious symptoms quelled by the appearance of Mr. Parks, accompanied by Mr. Lane, who, to her surprise, bore little resemblance to the truculent boor she had imagined; nor did his wife's deportment towards him partake of servility or marked deference. The entrance of these two checked further divulgations, and introduced a new set of topics; but Lizzie's pleasure was marred for that evening. In vain she expostulated with herself. "It was foolish to allow this idle gossip to discompose her. What if it were all true? George was so different from the men they had been describing; and she would try so hard to gratify his every whim, that they could never be participants in such disgraceful altercations." But reasoning and resolving did no good. She was low-spirited and miserable; and, worst of all, George, who came soon after Mr. Parks, saw at a glance that all was not right. Her smiling effort could not hoodwink him. He prudently forbore to take any notice of her dejection; and, by the time that his spicy sallies had set everybody to joking and laughing, she was able to appear quite like herself again.

"I saw Arthur this afternoon," said he to Mrs. Merry. "He will be along presently."

"Yes, I expect him," she rejoined.

"You know Mr. Merry, then?" said Lizzie, in a low voice.

"Know him! What a question! Mrs. Merry, here a moment, if you please. You have to answer to the grave charge of having passed a whole afternoon with my wife, and not hinted once that Arthur and I were old chums and inseparables, until he took an unaccountable fancy to like a certain lady (who shall be nameless) more than he did me. Is this your gratitude for my advocacy of his suit, when an unreasonable old gentleman demurred at granting it, because, forsooth, his daughter was too young to enter into a contract so important?"

Lizzie did not hear Mrs. Merry's retort. George and this tyrannical taskmaster had been boon companions. This argued a coincidence of tastes and sentiments. What if all men should, indeed, be alike? Would he, too, learn in time to rave, grumble, and neglect?

"Lizzie," said George, leading up a noble-looking man, who had just entered, "this is my friend Merry. You should have met before."

"I have been unfortunate, but not to blame, that we have not," replied Mr. Merry. And, having paid his respects gracefully to her, his next bow and smile were for "Annie."

"How different men are in society and at home!" reflected Mrs. Cushman, as she remarked this; and this feeling was uppermost in her mind until the company broke up.

"Mr. Sherman was at a *returned* meeting of the *Colonial Society*," his wife stated; and Mr. Cushman, with difficulty, screwed his face into grave respectfulness as he volunteered himself as her escort, her residence being in the same street as their boarding-house. They had the talk all to themselves on the way home, Lizzie speaking only in monosyllables. The poison was not without its effect. She could not help thinking that, if George were suffering, as he must see that she was, *she* could not appear unconcerned. It was her first hard thought of him, and it almost broke her heart to admit it. She had no sullenness in her nature; but she was hurt and disappointed.

"You are not well to-night, Lizzie?"

She stood by the fire, knotting her bonnet-strings around her taper finger.

"Yes, I am quite well."

"You are unhappy, then. It is useless to try to deceive me. I have watched you all the evening. Already a grief which you will not let me share, Lizzie?"

This was the drop too much. She sunk her head upon his shoulder and burst into tears; nor was it until his anxiety had increased to an insupportable degree that she could command her voice to tell him of the boding fears that oppressed her heart, and their origin. He did not interrupt the relation, although his lips parted more than once; but it is doubtful whether the nearly uttered ejaculation might not have startled more than edified the narrator. When she ceased, he looked relieved, ~~so~~ *so*, and amused.

"So your afternoon has been spent in discussing husbands," he said. "A sorry entertainment! I do not wonder at your being out of spirits. From your account, I should judge that we were pretty well 'showed up.' Is this a standing dish at these feminine assemblies?"

Lizzie could not refrain from smiling.

"I don't know. I never was at any but young-lady parties before."

"And then you talked of your beaux. Well, this is only a continuation of the same subject—

lovers are developed into married men. You have learned much to-day, dear Lizzie, of which I had rather you had remained ignorant. I hardly know whether you will now believe me, if I say that, as it is, I prefer your lessons in these matters should be taken from any one else than from me—that all your knowledge of the discomforts of housekeeping and sour-tempered husbands should be acquired from hearsay, not experience."

Lizzie's arms were around his neck in an instant. "Dear George!" was all that she could say. He went on, kindly and seriously—

"But this cannot be. I know that, in the revulsion of feeling, you are ready to look upon the histories of the tribulations of Mrs. Merry and her compeers as sheer fabrications, or exaggerations of trivial misunderstandings. The latter supposition may be correct, to a certain extent; and I shall presently enlighten you somewhat with regard to these benevolent ladies who have taken pity on your ignorance; still, I must admit that there is probably much sober truth in what they have said. Women are not angels; and men are more than one remove from perfection. Where there are faults, there must be suffering; but this may be greatly alleviated by mutual confidence, and a just appreciation, on each side, of the peculiar trials of the other. If, hereafter, you shall feel the want of perfect sympathy with your dispirited or nervous mood after toiling through the harassing routine of woman's every-day duties—laborious, if well performed; mortifying, in case of failure—if, seated in my comfortable chair in the corner, I forget, even while reaping the fruits of your industry, whose hands have adorned my Eden, you must not grieve your affectionate little heart with misgivings of my love. The thanks for which you had hoped, as the easily bestowed reward of your self-denial; the look that should have blessed your thoughtful kindness, may be for a time withheld; and instead, a coldly spoken word, which sounds very like a taunt, or a tart notice of some omission or blunder, may pierce you with a bitter sense of injustice. These are darkened moments, such as fall to the lot of the happiest wife. I say it to our shame; but do not judge us too harshly. You know nothing of the world in which we strive; I pray that you never may. I have heard of plants, natives of the tropics, which, on being transplanted in a colder climate, grow strong and hardy, but bear no more flowers or fruits; and a woman, fighting her way in a business life, reminds me of these. Her mind may be more vigorous than that of one raised in the atmosphere of home,

and visited only by the breath of affection, but the sweet blossoms of trust and love will never be again unfolded. It is a hard world, Lizzie—a hateful, suspicious world, full of heartlessness and deceit—a world that fosters men's ignoble passions, and beats down, with a hailstorm of ridicule, their holiest sentiments. You need not cling to me so tightly, 'love; while I have an arm to shield you, you shall never encounter these hardships. I am a man, and my duty is in the field. I only ask that, when I am worn out and heart-sick with defeat and discouragement, you will think of all this, and pity instead of chide."

Again "Dear, dear George!" And then a silence. George broke it with a laugh.

"And you were surprised at my keeping company with an ogre like Merry, and already beheld yourself crying with Annie upon the rug before a fireless hearth? Arthur deserves sympathy more than censure. His baseless fabric of perfect harmony and contentment came tumbling about his ears before he was a Benedict of two months' standing. Annie is a dear, warm-hearted creature, but incorrigibly thoughtless and frivolous. I shall never forget their first dinner-party. Arthur invited the members of our "bachelor club"—six in number—hinting, as he did so, at the superiority of 'voluntary' over 'hired' housekeepers. Two of us kept bachelor's hall, and the others picked up a living at boarding-houses and hotels. Being quite alive to the manifold disadvantages of these modes of subsistence, we considered this home-thrust cruel and ungenerous; and held a council of resentment for some time before we decided to pocket the insult and go. About an hour before dinner time, I left my office to prepare for the convivial occasion. I met Mrs. Merry ten steps from my door. She looked bewitchingly lovely; and there were two or three girls with her, all in the highest spirits, and apparently bound upon some frolic.

"Oh, Mr. Cushman!" she called, 'have you been to the menagerie?"

"I answered in the negative.

"Then do—there's a good creature! go with us to the door. I don't mind being beaules after we get in, but I can't pass through the crowd around the ticket-box. We must hurry, too, for I have only half an hour to spare. You know you dine with us to-day; and Arthur will be angry if I am not dressed in time. Ain't husbands particular?"

"Thus she prattled until we ascended Council Chamber Hill, on which the show was located. I procured tickets for the party; saw

them seated above the arena of sawdust, and human mingled with brute animals.

"Now," said Mrs. Merry, 'go dress for dinner.'

"As you may suppose, I did not fatigue myself by the hurry of my preparations. I dressed, and read all the daily newspapers ere I started. The guests were gathered together, but I was not surprised that the hostess was minus. Arthur controlled himself wonderfully well; but his eye wandered to the window every other minute, and more than once he broke off a sentence, as a step approached the parlor-door. It was only a servant, who peered in with eyes that told of overdone beef and fowls burnt to a cinder, as plainly as his lips growled, on his retreat: 'I wish mistis would come along.'

"Two hours after the appointed time, a fleet footstep was heard upon the stairs; and Arthur begged to be 'excused for an instant.' His face was no brighter when he rejoined us; and before long we sat down to what would have been an elegant repast, had it been served in time. Annie ran in, like a playful kitten, as we reached the dining-room, with—"I told you so, Arthur! I said I would be ready as soon as you were!"

"He interrupted her by presenting a gentleman, with whom she was not acquainted.

"I am afraid you think me shockingly unpunctual," she ran on, pouring out the words and soup at the same time, 'but that darling little pony made me forget everything else—and then a real live tiger leaped out upon a man! I screamed, but they said it was a part of the show—and then the monkeys! I never laughed so in all my life—and oh, Arthur! I rode upon the elephant!"

"The perspiration thickened upon Merry's forehead with each fresh course of dishes.

"You don't know how mad he is," whispered Annie to me. 'I tell you he scolded! But I don't care. I had a splendid time at the menagerie.'

"But once did Arthur look glad or at his ease—when we took our hats to leave. We walked down the street, talking of anything rather than our dinner, when Tom Hinton, whose fun-making propensities are incurable, burst forth with—"Well, boys, it's my impression that, if Mrs. Merry does go elsewhere to 'see the elephant,' poor Arthur need not stir from home to indulge his curiosity in that respect."

"How could she be so careless of his feelings, and for such childish nonsense! How absurd!" exclaimed Lizzie.

"Of Mrs. Lane's *ménage*, I know nothing,"

continued George. "Her philippic against her stronger half may be just. My intercourse with him has been chiefly confined to business matters, but I do not think him ill-natured. Mrs. Sherman's piteous lamentations, however, border upon the ludicrous, when one remembers that she was a respectable maiden lady, already past the bloom of life, when Sherman found her living on a snug farm in the country, with no male protector, and no companion except an orphan niece, ten years of age. She looked after her broad acres with a vigilant eye; and the savings of years of thriftiness supplied, in her lover's eyes, her want of personal attractions. I am not surprised at her pretended pretty fears. We are apt to assume the appearance of qualities in which we know ourselves to be deficient. This will account also for Prescott's sensitiveness on the score of being ruled. The man is hen-pecked to such a degree that his very dress shows it. His collar hangs over his stock with a limp helplessness only equalled by the meek droop of his eyelids, and the corners of his mouth, and his hat! I could single it out among a thousand as that of a man who dared not entertain a sneaking notion that his soul was his own. But my gossip is degenerating into scandal. Have I disposed of all your difficulties?"

"Yes. How silly to have let them annoy me! But they all joined, either by word or look, in the condemnation of men in general, and husbands in particular; all except Mrs. Parks and Mrs. Oram."

"Mrs. Oram!" he repeated, with a start. "You did not tell me that she was there."

"She had to go home to a sick child before nightfall; but what of her? Is she not a fit associate for me?"

"A fit associate! Ah, Lizzie, she is one of a thousand; deserving of a far happier fate than the one which awaits her."

"Is her husband unkind?"

"No—that is, not habitually. I do not fear to intrust to your discretion a secret known to a very small number of his friends. He is a man of shining qualities and powerful, but perverted energies. He failed in business about two years ago; and being in want of a confidential clerk, I offered the situation to him until he should procure more lucrative employment. His able discharge of duty and engaging demeanor so won upon my esteem and affection that, at the end of twelve months, I made proposals of co-partnership. He listened with downcast eyes and a face in which gratitude struggled with shame, expressions which perplexed and mortified me."

"Mr. Cushman," said he, as I finished, "I am more than grateful for this new manifestation of confidence, unmerited though it is. It is an act worthy of yourself, my best, my only friend. You took me by the hand when all others turned away from the outcast, and restored me to apparent respectability—*apparent!*" he repeated, with a stinging emphasis of self-reproach.

"I was bewildered. He had never been an outcast. His character stood as high when he entered my office as it now did. But his distress was real, whatever was its imaginary cause; and I tried by argument and assurances to dispel the unhappy hallucination. I alluded to his talents; his integrity, as displayed in every act of his past life; to his faithfulness in my service; and added that my offer was prompted by a desire to evince my recognition and appreciation of these things.

"Oh, cease, for pity's sake!" he exclaimed. "You drive me mad! I faithful! I upright! Look here!" and he pulled rather than led me to his desk. "There!" tossing out a bundle of papers. "Examine those."

"I opened the package. It contained copies of deeds, etc., executed in the neatest manner. 'I see nothing wrong in them,' I said, after inspection. I seem to feel now the look he fastened upon me.

"You gave me the originals to copy?"

"Certainly."

"And what, sir, do you say of the wretch who permitted his tenderly-nurtured wife to bend for entire nights over them, doing his work while he lay snoring in drunken unconsciousness?"

"Alfred!" I ejaculated, ready to believe his senses wandering. "You were never guilty of such a deed!"

"He laughed like a maniac.

"I tell you I have done it again and again! I learned to drink long ago, and she concealed it. When I came here, she knelt to me—knelt to a fiend and a brute! and prayed me to abandon the accursed practice. Then, as she found me going down, down, night after night (for I only indulged at night and in secret), she said not a word, only asked me to bring my writing home in the evening instead of remaining down town. One morning I awoke late, to the horrors of a day succeeding a night of debauchery; and superadded was the recollection of unperformed duty. It was necessary that my task should be accomplished. I have never yet stained my soul with a lie; and ignominious expulsion was before me. With shaking hands I untied the papers and

looked mechanically over them. They were ready-written in a bold hand, a surprisingly accurate imitation of my own; but there were, now and then, delicate strokes that betrayed the woman. *She* had done it all. I might die a thousand deaths without experiencing the agony of that moment. It is a common occurrence now.'

"The poor fellow's face worked frightfully with emotion. 'This is my integrity,' he said, hoarsely—'my fidelity! Why do you look at me so sorrowfully? Spurn me from your door. I am not fit to dwell with honest men. I make but one request. Do not let my ill-used Mary know that the shame which is killing her is public.'"

"Oh, George!" pleaded Lizzie, lifting her tear-laden eyes to his. "You did not let him go!"

"No, dearest. I told him that I would not withdraw my trust. Had my friendship been less strong, regard for his noble wife would have led me to befriend him by every means in my power. The partnership scheme was abandoned, but he retains his clerkship; and although my opened eyes can trace the ravages of dissipation, his books are still kept with strict exactness. But this cannot last forever; sooner or later he will sink to the level of a common drunkard."

"And she has this weight always upon her mind?" mused Lizzie. "This has given her

face its sorrowful cast. I cannot sufficiently admire her prudent silence."

George shook his head doubtfully.

"Do you commend her prudence only? I do not wish to excite in you uncharitable feelings towards your acquaintances of your own sex, but it is enigmatical to me how a woman, who has one atom of love or respect for her husband, can make his faults or foibles the subject of conversation, even in a coterie of her picked friends. It has, to me, the semblance of a violation of her marriage vow. She is bound to 'honor' as well as 'love.' His failings should be sacred—locked up in her bosom; not held up to ridicule and censure."

"Just what I felt all the time they were speaking!" interrupted Lizzie, eagerly. "I cannot think that I could even discuss your peculiarities and offences with my dearest friend. How can I, when my husband is my nearest—my sole confidant?"

"There spoke the right mind and the true woman's heart!" replied he, with an affectionate kiss. "*Confidantes* are dangerous indulgences to both husband and wife. A man who breathes a syllable of disapprobation of his partner to other ears than hers, is a fit candidate for the pillory; and from female cabals the Fates preserve me! I had rather stand with him in the same honorable position than be flayed and dissected in a 'Ladies' Sympathy Meeting.'"

KATHLEEN, THE VILLAGE BELLE.

BY PAULINE FORSYTH.

(See Plate.)

"Ever till now,
When men were fond, I smiled and wondered how."
SHAKESPEARE.

KELLOE is a pretty little village on the western coast of Ireland. Some ten or twelve years ago, before it had been decimated by famine, or pressed onward by strong necessity in the race of improvement, it was a quiet, rustic, old-fashioned kind of a place, where the people thought too well of their fathers and grandfathers not to look suspiciously on all innovations and new customs, and few could be found who would acknowledge that the course of the world was not of a crab-like nature, instead of being, as the modern heresy has it, "upward and onward."

Indeed, the simple village people troubled themselves but little about the world in general, but concentrated their interest within the narrow compass of their own and their neighbors' affairs. Even their local politics were carried on in an indifferent and careless way, which was owing perhaps to their being of a very meagre and uninteresting kind, and also, in some measure, to the villagers finding ample occupation for thought and muscle in winning bread and raiment for their families. The "great agitator" himself would have found it difficult to make them forget the pressing wants of the day in the vaguer, if higher, interest of the liberty of their country.

The postmaster of this quiet and rural town was Mr. Drummond. He had filled the office for more than twenty years to the satisfaction of all parties, and had no fear that he should not continue to hold it as long as he could perform its duties. The British policy being, in this respect, essentially different from our own. On the small salary which his situation afforded him, aided by a little patrimony in the shape of a cottage and an acre or two of land, Mr. Drummond had brought up a family of eight daughters.

"The eight belles of Killoe" they were called, for there was not one who had not a more than ordinary share of beauty. But the flower of them all, the belle of the belles, was Kathleen, the fifth daughter. Hers was the large and generous style of beauty that fills as well as

strikes the eye. Her movements were full of buoyant grace. She bore herself with a shy air, half proud, half deprecating, that seemed to plead for love, even while asserting its independence of it. She seldom let the light of her eyes, large and soft, and full of the tenderest and most womanly pleadings for affection, rest upon any but those to whom she was bound by the ties of kinship. She seemed to dread the revelation they might make of her loving nature, and so, like the coquette she was, she veiled them with her white lids, and turned her head away with the stately shyness of a deer, while her lovers pressed their suit, and vowed and begged and strove for a kindly glance, as if their everlasting welfare was written in those eyes of a dove-like gray.

She received the homage of her adorers calmly, as a monarch listens to the acclamations of his subjects; but yet their eager fervor filled her with a quiet wonder. Affectionate though she was, her love was of a slow and cautious growth, and she could not comprehend or sympathize with the ardent flames that it seemed to need but a word or look from her to kindle. So she coquetted, played, and dallied with her troop of lovers, with but little thought or heed of the pain that was in store for them when the decisive answer came. She gloried in her charms, even while she was astonished at their power, and looked upon the extravagances spoken and acted by her admirers as a sort of incomprehensible vagaries that would pass away in time and leave no trace.

She had good reason for thinking thus; for one after another, her lovers, finding their suit hopeless, consoled themselves with more sympathetic hearts. Not one had ever aroused her remorse, or deepened her belief in the strength of his feelings by any desperate act. There was but one who had remained faithful through the many trials and misgivings to which her coquetries had exposed him; and perhaps a latent hope, founded on some slight preferences Kathleen had inadvertently shown him from time to time, joined with his love to make him more constant than his rivals.

Robert Carroll was a young engineer, who had been sent in the way of his business to Kelloe,



and had first seen Kathleen when, at the age of fourteen, her beauty was but in its dawning—when she was yet “a rose, with all its sweetest leaves still folded.” For the three succeeding years he had found some excuse for making, at short intervals, long visits to Kathleen’s secluded home, and he had watched the slow maturing of her charms of person and of nature with the absorbing interest of a devoted lover.

Kathleen could not help perceiving that, in mind and character and person, Mr. Carroll was superior to all her other suitors. The mysterious link of sympathy, of congeniality, too, drew her more closely to him than to any one out of her own family whom she had ever met; and, if he had not been so very ardent and exacting, she might have allowed him to perceive as much.

But she was not yet prepared to reciprocate his feelings in all their intensity. She was very happy at home, and could not bear to think of breaking all the household ties that bound her to her family; and she shrank, with the reluctance of a timid and apprehensive nature, from the decisive step of marriage. The conflict between the two feelings, the love just springing up with the affections that had so long been sufficient for her happiness, showed itself in her conduct to him. It was varying, capricious, and unreasonable.

When he complained, Kathleen laughed at him. If he took refuge in an air of proud indifference, she grew cold and haughty. If he entreated, she escaped from him; and it was only at rare intervals that she would listen to the expression of his love, and show by her varying color and softly shadowed eyes that the deep fountain of her heart was at last unsealed. Kathleen always reproached herself for these involuntary self-revealings. She was ashamed of them, blushed whenever she thought of them, and made amends for her folly, as she considered it, by some most defiant act, meant to prove at once that she was as free as the summer air, and regardless, like that, on whom her sweetness might fall.

She woke one morning with a feeling of self-dissatisfaction oppressing her. She gradually recalled its source. The evening before she had been walking with two of her sisters in one of the green lanes that led through the pleasant country around Killoe. Mr. Carroll had joined them; and exactly how he had contrived it, Kathleen could not tell, but before long they were by themselves, her sisters far on before, almost out of sight. She was moving slowly by his side, while the moonlight, the dewy fra-

grance that filled the air, the hush and stillness that brooded over the earth, and the passionate whispers of her companion, all wooed her to betray the secret of which she was as yet herself unconscious.

In the soberness of the morning hour, she recalled the few words that had been won from her the evening before.

“He will think I love him. How could I say that?” thought Kathleen, blushing in her self-humiliation, and covering her face with her hands, although she was alone. “I promised,” thought she, “to ride over with him to cousin Catharine Dolan’s and spend the day; but that I will not do. I don’t think I can ever speak to him again.”

She had not decided what she should do to avoid the dreaded ride, when she saw Mr. Carroll driving up to the door. He had seen her, too, so that there was for the moment no escape. His countenance was lighted up by the happiness of his heart, his manner was joyous, and, as Kathleen thought, exulting and triumphant. His very tones, as he called out to ask if she were ready, jarred upon her as being full of certainty and security.

Without replying, except by a hasty bow, Kathleen sprang up the flight of stairs leading to her room, as Mr. Carroll thought, to put on her bonnet and shawl, but, in reality, to make her retreat down another way, and, by a side door, to escape into one of the many green lanes that led in various directions from her father’s house.

After waiting at the gate until his patience was exhausted, Mr. Carroll went into the house to discover the cause of the delay. Kathleen’s sisters sought in all directions for her, but in vain. At length one of the younger ones, coming in from a morning ramble, testified to having met her half a mile from home, walking with Albert Sullivan.

It is difficult to say whether surprise or indignation prevailed when Robert Carroll understood how far he had been trifled with. He drove hastily off, vowing internally to dismiss forever Kathleen and all connected with her from his thoughts. Nor was his irritation soothed by the arch and mischievous smile which stole over her face as she nodded to him, when he whirled past Albert and herself strolling slowly along together.

As soon as he was out of sight, Kathleen bade Albert good-morning, and directed her steps homeward. She was relieved that she had escaped a long *tête-à-tête* drive with one whose power over her she had begun to dread with a

sort of indefinite fear; she was glad that she had had so good an opportunity of convincing him of her indifference and disregard. But mingled with these feelings of satisfaction were others not so pleasant. She tried hard, but in vain, to justify her conduct. Her sisters, too, blamed her, and her mother reproved. So that, after she had had a day or two for reflection, she came to the conclusion that she had not treated Mr. Carroll with proper consideration, and that she owed his wounded feelings some apology. She decided that, having by this act proved to him her independence, she could now afford to be a little kinder than usual in her manner. Her sisters said that she would not have the opportunity to make the reparation. But she knew better than they the extent of her power, and smiled as she listened to their predictions.

The event proved that she was right. On the third morning after her exploit, on which she still could not help secretly priding herself, she was walking through the same lane that had witnessed her weakness, as she considered it, a few evenings before. With a basket on her arm, and her bonnet swinging carelessly in her hand, she went on murmuring, in a low musical voice, snatches of melodies that went floating through her brain. Her rich hair caught and threw back the golden sunlight. Her hands and arms, which a critic in such matters might consider rather too large perhaps, but which were too exquisitely moulded to awaken any emotion but admiration in an ordinary observer, were bare, and over them, as over brow and neck, was the soft roseate flush of perfect health. Her cheeks and lips were glowing, and her eyes radiant, and in her countenance there was a dowy softness that only belongs to innocence and youth, and comes only with the first throbbings of that love which is to prove mightier than all other earthly affections.

Suddenly, Mr. Carroll appeared before her. The greetings on either side were cold and constrained. Yet Kathleen only waited for the first word from him to show that she had in her heart a little liking for him, if he would not build too much upon so slight a feeling. Unfortunately, Mr. Carroll's first remark piqued her, and aroused her pride.

"I see plainly now," said he, with a displeased air and tone, "that it is useless for me to hope to obtain from you any reciprocation of my feelings towards you. When you seem most kind, I find it is only an artifice to lead me into some painful and mortifying situation. I am at last convinced that you have not the slightest regard for me."

"I am glad," said Kathleen, calmly, "that you see at last what I have assured you of several times."

Mr. Carroll could not gainsay this, and he went on.

"I have wasted too much time here already. I shall leave this country to-morrow morning." And he looked sideways at her, to watch the effect of his words. As far as he could see, they had no effect at all.

Kathleen merely replied, "Ah," in the most careless manner.

"I did not like to go without seeing you once more. Man never loved woman as I have loved you; and, if you would have consented to be my wife, my whole life should have been devoted to your happiness. But I have no right to blame you for your coldness to me. It is by your coquetry that you have made me feel how unwarrantably you have been trifling with me. Still, I cannot part with you in anger. Farewell," he continued; "and, believe me, you have no friend who wishes your happiness more sincerely than myself."

For a moment their hands were clasped, and, before Kathleen had time to realize the meaning of the words Robert Carroll had just uttered, he was gone. Resting her basket upon a rude bench by the wayside, she stood looking after him, wondering if he were in earnest, and never intended to return; while the wistful and troubled glance that she sent after him revealed that the love that had been so tardy in its awakening was at last making itself felt. But she was yet hardly conscious of its power. The golden haze that, in the blessed ignorance of youth, throws its bewildering glamour over the present and the future, prevented Kathleen from seeing clearly the real state of affairs—that she had childishly played with and lost the heart of the one whom she would more willingly call her husband than any other whom she had ever met.

Yet, as weeks and months passed away, this became ever clearer to her. Perhaps all the more so that Mr. Carroll had fulfilled his declaration, and had left Ireland with no intention of returning to it again. He had found occupation in England, and it was reported in Kelloe that he was succeeding wonderfully in his profession.

The ideal has a large share in the love of many women. And, in her thoughts of Mr. Carroll, Kathleen not only gave him the virtues and attractions which really belonged to him, but gifted him with all the imaginary perfections of a hero of romance. Her heart occupied with thoughts of him, she turned a regardless ear to the flattery and homage of all her other suitors.

There was a fluttering hope in the depths of her heart which whispered to her assurances of Robert Carroll's constancy, and of a happy meeting yet in store for both.

Kathleen had not much time for these musings. The real cares and troubles of life soon drove for a time all other thoughts from her mind. Her father died, and her mother and five daughters were left with no dependence but a small income hardly enough for one. The three older daughters were married, one in Ireland, and the other two had emigrated to America.

Mr. Drummond had exacted a promise from his wife that she would do her utmost to keep the family together, and not to allow her daughters to leave her care but for the protection of a home of their own. This she contrived to do, with the assistance of her children, until the time of general distress fell upon that unhappy country. Then she began to listen to the urgent entreaties of her children in America that she would join them there; and at last, seeing no alternative between that and entire poverty and separation, believing that only by that course she could accomplish her husband's last wishes, she sailed with her five daughters for New York.

Of them all, not one, not even Mrs. Drummond herself, grieved so much over their departure as did Kathleen. She had a peculiar cause for sorrow. She had always believed that, notwithstanding his last protestation, Robert Carroll would return to her once more. That had been the star of hope that lighted up the year of toil and hardship through which she had just been passing. And that he should return and find her far away, with the ocean rolling its vast distance between them, was a thought full of poignant anguish. But she was too fond a daughter to pain her mother's heart by expressing a wish to be left behind, and so it was only by her uncontrollable burst of grief, as she saw the land slowly recede from her straining eyes, that they knew how deep sorrow this removal had caused her.

Once safely arrived in New York, Mrs. Drummond was soon settled, with the aid of her sons-in-law, in a comfortable, though small dwelling in the upper part of the city. Here each of her daughters contributed in their own way to the support of the family. One obtained employment from a button manufactory, another from an umbrella-maker, another was employed in a bookbindery. Kathleen embroidered beautifully, and, having succeeded in obtaining a few fashionable and dress-loving patronesses, was soon constantly and profitably occupied.

Thus two or three quiet years passed away. One by one her sisters married, and left their mother's roof for the shelter of their husbands' home. The youngest one, who had been the darling, as Kathleen was the pride and stay of the family, was taken by her husband, Mr. Dickson, to Michigan. Soon after this, Mrs. Drummond began to perceive that Kathleen was overtasking her strength by her unrelenting industry. The increased exertion she was obliged to make, now that she was unaided by her sisters, in order to meet the household expenses, was too great a demand upon her.

"I think we shall have to accept your sister Catharine's invitation, and go to live with her," said she to Kathleen one day; "you are getting quite pale and thin."

"Oh no, mother," exclaimed Kathleen, "I am very well. I feel as though I should never have a home again, if we give up this."

"You have had the offer of a great many," said Mrs. Drummond, a little regretfully.

"Yes, mother; but you are not sorry that I love you better than any one else. I shall never leave you."

Mrs. Drummond yielded for that time, for she loved Kathleen too well to thwart her. But she recurred to the removal again and again, until at last the daughter saw that the only way to set her mother's mind at rest was to consent. This she did with a heavy heart, and was superintending the transfer of their slender possessions to her sister's home, when a letter was put into her hand.

It was from Mr. Dickson, entreating them to come immediately to Michigan. His wife was dangerously ill, and was so urgent in her entreaties that he would send for Kathleen or her mother that he could not resist her wishes.

There was no time for hesitation. Mrs. Drummond was somewhat of an invalid—far too delicate, Kathleen thought, to undertake so hurried a journey. She would go herself, there was no alternative; although, to one of her shrinking and apprehensive nature, it seemed an undertaking full of difficulties and perils. Within two hours after she received the missive from her brother, she was on her way to her sick sister.

After travelling for three days and nights, almost without rest or sleep, burdened with a feeling of anxious grief at the sad cause of her journey, bewildered by the constant and hurried change from steamboat to car, and car to steamboat, and oppressed with the crowd of ever-changing, yet always strange and curious faces by which she was surrounded, Kathleen found

herself at last within a few hours' ride of her brother-in-law's farm.

The last three days had been so full of confusing and oppressive changes that they seemed to her like a troubled dream; and it was with somewhat of the same sensations as those with which the slumberer rouses himself from the nightmare that she welcomed the end of her journey. The twilight was just deepening into evening when she entered the cars which were to carry her within a few miles of her brother's place. All the seats seemed full, but at last the conductor found her an unoccupied one.

The cars moved rapidly on, and, for nearly an hour, Kathleen sat with her veil closely drawn over her face, trying her best to make her stock of patience, which had dwindled down to its lowest point, last a little longer. She could hardly subdue her restlessness, her eager longing to be at once with her sister. All at once, she remembered that it was necessary to ask the conductor to let her know when the cars arrived at Charlesville. She was to stop there, and obtain a carriage of some sort to go to the place of her destination. She looked around for him, but he was nowhere to be seen. She waited until she feared that, in the increasing darkness, they might pass Charlesville without her knowledge.

"Perhaps the gentleman by me can tell me about it," thought she; and she half turned towards him to ask him the question. But she saw what seemed merely a great coat and a hat, with the tip of a nose; evidently the gentleman was enjoying a deep slumber. Kathleen did not venture to arouse him. Fortunately, in a few minutes a sudden jolt threw him a little forward and woke him. Kathleen turned to him before he had time to adjust himself for another nap—

"Can you tell me," said she, in a hesitating voice, and putting back her veil that she might be understood more easily, "how far we are from Charlesville?"

The gentleman, who sat turned from the window, was in deep shadow, but the bright moonlight fell full on Kathleen's face. The gentleman addressed turned politely towards her—

"I believe, madam, it is about—Kathleen!—is it possible?"

"Mr. Carroll!" And it was with difficulty that Kathleen could control herself, worn out as she was by fatigue and anxiety. But she would not on any account have allowed Mr. Carroll to discover the real state of her feelings towards him.

She explained to him the different circum-

stances that had brought her first to New York and then to Michigan; and, in return, Mr. Carroll informed her that, soon after leaving Ireland, he had joined a brother of his, who was advantageously employed on the railroads in America, and had remained there ever since. He was at present busy in completing the railroad on which they were then travelling.

While they were still conversing, the train reached Charlesville.

"There is no regular conveyance from this place to your brother's farm," said Mr. Carroll to Kathleen; "but, if you will wait in the ladies' saloon a few minutes, I think I shall be able to obtain you some kind of conveyance."

He seemed, as a matter of course, to take upon himself the charge of Kathleen, and she was equally contented to find some one who would relieve her from the heavy burden of acting for herself in a situation so new to her. In a few minutes he returned, saying that he had found a little light wagon, which was now ready for her. After he had seated her comfortably in it, Kathleen was astonished to see that he sprang in and took the reins, with the evident intention of driving.

"Are you not going on in the cars?" she asked. "Don't go so far out of your way on my account, I beg."

"Ah, it will be too pleasant a ride to Mr. Dickson's, this moonlight evening, for me to lose it willingly," said he.

"Do you know him? Have you ever seen my sister since her marriage?" asked Kathleen, with a sudden pang. For, if he had known that Mrs. Dickson was her sister, he would probably have learned that she was in New York; and, in that case, his not having made an effort to see her would prove his indifference.

"I know Mr. Dickson slightly, and I passed his house once or twice a year or two ago; but I had not heard of his marriage till you told me of it."

Kathleen was somewhat relieved, and they drove on for a few minutes in silence. The moon shone brightly overhead, the trees waved slowly in the gentle evening breeze, the air was heavy with the sweet odors of the forest around. A profound stillness wrapt the whole earth. At last, Mr. Carroll spoke—

"There is something in this night that reminds me of the last evening I walked with you in Ireland. Do you remember it?"

"Yes," said Kathleen, in a low voice. She had just been recalling the same time.

"You made me very happy that evening. Do you remember?"

Kathleen smiled.

"And more unhappy the next day than I ever thought I could be made by any human being."

He had no need to ask Kathleen if she recalled that and the subsequent interview, for her countenance revealed her vivid memory of the past.

"I vowed then that I would never give another woman the same power over me, and I have kept that resolution very well so far. But I don't know that I made an especial vow against you. I hope I didn't, for I am afraid I should not have kept it. Could you not treat me a little better than you did then, Kathleen?"

"Yes," was the reply; and, for some time, Mr. Carroll had to be contented with that simple confession. But, in the course of the long and exciting conversation that followed, Kathleen allowed a few inadvertent remarks to slip from her. These led to sudden and delightful suspicions on Mr. Carroll's part; and, at last, he contrived to extort from Kathleen the real truth with regard to her feelings towards him—that she had never loved, nor ever, under any circumstances, could love any one but a certain Robert Carroll, who had left her in a sudden pique five years before.

Before Mr. Carroll had half finished his expressions of grateful joy at this confession, or of anger at himself for his unforgiving temper, as he stigmatized what he had formerly called a proper feeling of self-respect, they had reached Mr. Dickson's, and Kathleen found herself, almost before she knew where she was, in her sister's sick room.

To her great delight, she found Annie, her sister, recovering. Then, for the first time, she yielded to her feelings, and wept for a few minutes violently. But tears of happiness are soon dried, and, before the evening was over, Kathleen began to think herself the most blest of mortals.

In a few days, Mr. Carroll asked her again to drive with him. This time she did not disappoint him. In the course of their drive, they passed a very pretty romantic-looking house, standing on a little elevation among a grove of noble old trees.

"There, Kathleen, that is our house. Do you see it? I thought a year or two ago of keeping bachelor's hall there; but I suppose you would not hear of such a thing now?"

"Yes; I have no objection certainly."

Mr. Carroll looked incredulous.

ANNA, OR COTTAGE DEVOTION.

de Forrest, Virginia

Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Sep 1855; 51, American Periodicals

pg. 204A



ANNA, OR COTTAGE DEVOTION.

BY VIRGINIA DE FORREST.

(See Plate.)

ANNA FISHER was a farmer's daughter, but her beauty might have been coveted by many a high-born dame. As her father was in comfortable circumstances, and both he and his wife were proud of their lovely daughter, she was allowed to work or be idle at her own fancy, and her only regular duty was attention to the comfort of her blind sister Ella. Still, although preserving her delicate hands soft and white, and her form stately and tall, Anna was by no means a useless member of the cottage family. Her busy fingers shaped the snowy caps, which her mother declared "fitted her head as if they were made for it." Ella's spotless dresses and muslins owed much of their purity to her sister's watchful care, and many a dainty dish found its way to the farmer's table which he well knew was provided by Anna. So, with light pleasant duties, rendered dear by home affections, the young girl's life sped on. But a change came.

There arrived at the pleasant village, for recreation, a young man of handsome face and figure, and winning address—one skilled in the art of pleasing. With his time unoccupied, and his fancy struck by Anna's exceeding loveliness, he determined to win the love of the young country girl.

It was just after sunset, one pleasant spring evening, that Anna was walking slowly through one of her father's meadows on her way home, when she was startled by the report of a gun from a little thicket near her. With a feeling of terror, for the sound was not a common one in that peaceful neighborhood, she quickened her pace, and was hurrying on, when a voice calling her made her pause; in an instant the sportsman stood before her, apologizing for the fright he had caused her, and pleading the unfrequented spot as an excuse for his having chosen it for sporting.

"But what were you shooting so late as this?"

The young man was unprepared for this question, and stammered something about an accidental discharge.

Accidental! So far so as watching for some hours for Anna's return, and then firing in the

hopes of startling her, could make it. He introduced himself as Edwin Parker, from Boston, and she in return told him her name. When they parted at Farmer Fisher's gate, it was with a determination on his part that this should not be their last meeting, and a strong desire on hers to see him again.

Somehow it happened that Anna grew very fond of taking long strolls about sunset; and Edwin, by some unaccountable magic, was always going the same way about the same time.

I will now give my readers the substance of a conversation which passed between the lovers one evening, some four or five weeks after their first meeting. They were walking in the old meadow, Edwin's arm was thrown round Anna's waist in the most natural way possible.

"Anna," he said, in a low tone, "you do not answer me; I say I must return to Boston tomorrow."

"It is so sudden!" murmured the young girl. "But you will be here soon again, Edwin?"

"That, it is impossible for me to tell. It may be years before I can visit this spot again. Oh, Anna!" he cried, in a sudden burst of passion, "how can I live without you? Why must we part?"

"Hush, Edwin, you are too violent. You will, you must return soon!"

"Soon! A whole year *must* pass before I can come here again."

There was a moment's silence, then bending over her, Edwin whispered: "Anna, do you love me?"

"You know I do," she answered.

"Do you love me well enough to trust your future happiness in my hands, to be my wife?"

"I do, but my father?"

"Hates me; I know it well," said Edwin, bitterly. "He believes because I am no farmer's lad, but a gentleman, that there is no truth or goodness in me. Believe me, Anna, it is only his prejudice against cities that causes your father's dislike to me."

"But," faltered Anna, "that prejudice is so strong that I fear he will never consent to my wedding you."

"Oh, my wife, dearest, and he will forgive

you. Though he might not be willing to let his child go, still, believe me, if the knot was tied, he would forgive."

It took long, even with Edwin's most subtle reasoning, to win Anna's consent to a clandestine marriage, but it was given at length, and, with a promise to be in the meadow that night prepared for a journey to Boston, she left him.

When she reached home, she found the family only awaiting her return for the customary evening devotions. Seating herself opposite her father, Anna listened to the words of Divine truth which he read. After reading a chapter from the New Testament, he read, in a clear, distinct voice, the commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Then rising, he kissed Ella and Anna, and left the room.

Anna sat motionless where he had left her; her mother, the servant, her little brother, and, last of all, Ella left the room, but still she remained.

"Heavenly Father," she murmured, bowing her head upon her hands, "strengthen this poor head, and guide me in the right way." Heavy sobs choked her voice, and she gave way to a violent fit of weeping.

"Sister Anna," said the low, sweet voice of her blind sister, coming in, "you are weeping! Will you not tell me what troubles you?"

Choking back her sobs, Anna endeavored to speak cheerfully to Ella; it was in vain; and, after one or two fruitless efforts, she silently embraced her, and sought her own room.

Edwin Parker was early at the appointed rendezvous, and awaited impatiently for Anna. The hour was past, and still she came not. At length, weary with watching, Edwin strode from the meadow to the little country inn where he was boarding. On his table he found a tiny note directed to himself.

"Ah!" he murmured, as he tore it open, "detained at home, I imagine; this will explain all."

Within, he found these words—

"DEAR EDWIN: Could one who forsook her first duty, that to her parents, fulfil the holy duties the name of wife would bring? I dare not come: it has cost me much to write this, but I feel that I am doing right, and that strengthens me. Win my father's consent, and I am yours.
ANNA."

"Pshaw!" said Edwin, tossing the note impatiently into the fire, "it ain't worth the trouble."

The next morning, Edwin Parker had left the village.

About a month after this, Anna was in the garden watering some plants when her father joined her.

"Anna," said he, "do you recollect a young man who was here some weeks ago, named Parker?"

How her heart bounded!

"Yes, father," she said.

"He has been arrested for forgery, and is—Heavens, Anna, how pale you are! Are you faint?"

"I am better now," said Anna, struggling for composure. "Father, I will tell you all, and then pray for your forgiveness."

"Dear Anna, did you think your old father was blind; no, no my child, you need tell me nothing; the commandment was not selected by chance; I knew all then, and Heaven alone knew the joy of your father's heart when he saw you still with him after the tempter had left the place."

"How did you know?" asked the astonished girl."

"I was passing in the thicket when your appointment was made, and overheard all. I watched your chamber door all night, thinking to stop you by force if you ventured out! Thank God, it was not needed."

"Thank God, indeed!" said Anna. "Had I not called upon his name, I should now be either the forger's wife, or the wretched, suspected daughter."

TRIALS OF AN ENGLISH HOUSEKEEPER.

NO. II.—MY "AT HOME DAY."

"I see her dancing in the hall—I see her dancing in the hall—

I see her dancing—she heeds me not!"

HENRY RUSSELL (*The Maniac*).

I THOUGHT I should have gone mad on my "at home day." I really expected it would have been the death of poor dear Edward; and, I am sure, for myself, I made up my mind that, come what would, I'd never go through another such a time, not even if I was to be made a princess.

Very early in the morning, I rang the bell for Mary to help me dress; but, when she came up, she was so overcome with drink that I could scarcely bear to have her come near me, though where she could have got it at that hour I could not conceive; but I found it all out before the end of the day. Nothing in the house, with any spirit in it, was safe from that abominable toper of mine. As for locks and keys, they were of no more use than policemen. She had positively been drinking all my eau de Cologne, and filling the bottle up with turpentine, so that I saturated all my things with the horrid stuff; and any one would have thought I had been newly French-polished.

When I came down stairs, I found that the door-step had never been touched, nor the hall or stairs swept—not even so much as a mat shaken, nor a thing dusted, so that you might have written your name on the backs of the chairs and tables in the drawing-room; and it was past twelve before I could get that wretch of a Mary even to clear away the breakfast-things out of the parlor, and I had the greatest difficulty to make her go and dress herself fit to be seen. I had to light the fire in the drawing-room, and dust the place myself, dressed as I was, or else it would never have been done.

I had hardly finished when there came the first double-knock at the door, and Mary not down stairs to answer it. So, I rushed up to her room, and bundled her down as quick as I could, though she had been at her old tricks again, I could see, and was really not in a fit state to be trusted to go to the door; but what could I do? I had only time to seat myself, and take up one of the books off the drawing-room table, when the street-door was opened,

and then, to my great horror, I heard Mary talking, at the top of her voice, to the visitors in the passage, and demanding to shake hands with them, and calling them a set of stuck-up things because they wouldn't. So I hurried down, and, looking at her as if I could have eaten her, told her to go down stairs directly, and remember who and what she was, and where she came from.

I found it was poor Mrs. Baylies and her lovely girls that Mary had been insulting in this dreadful manner, and who were quite flurried at her strange goings-on. There was not a single person who came into the house that day that she did not insult in some way or other; and she would go singing and dancing about like a downright maniac, and it was only by promising her some warm spirits and water at last that I induced her to be quiet.

I was so distressed that, instead of my friends congratulating me on my improved appearance, they did nothing but tell me that they could perceive that Mary was worrying me dreadfully, and that they had never seen me look so badly. And they kindly advised me to get the girl out of the house as soon as possible, saying that, if she were a servant of theirs, they should expect to be burned alive in their beds, while dear mamma, who is naturally a long-headed woman, said that every morning she confidently expected to find the place destroyed by fire, and that her dear children had perished in the flames, all which took such a hold on my mind that I could not get a wink of sleep for a week afterwards, and was always fancying I could hear the boards crackling, and kept getting up and going over the house, shivering, in my night-dress, to satisfy myself that all was safe.

We had twelve visitors, at one time, in the drawing-room, and all of them highly desirable acquaintance, being people well to do in the world. Mamma had made me a present of two bottles of her cherry brandy, and, as she thought it was uncommonly fine, she wished our friends to try it; so I had to find my keys and go down stairs for it, which I could not see the use of, for there was plenty of excellent red and white wine on the table, and that was good enough for any one, I should think. However, I returned,

with one of the bottles, and an agreeable smile on my countenance, to the drawing-room; then, giving it to mamma, I told her pleasantly that she should fill the glasses, and have all the credit of it to herself. And so she did, and, handing them around, observed to Mrs. Lockley, who is the wife of Edward's best client, and of highly genteel connections, that she should like her to try that, for she flattered herself that she would find it very fine, and not to be had everywhere, as she had made it herself, after her own peculiar way, and that she felt convinced that any pastry-cook would gladly give her twenty guineas for the receipt, and that she always made a point of using none but the very best cognac, together with the finest morella cherries that were to be picked up in the market.

When she had filled all their glasses, dear, unconscious mamma sat down with a self-contented smile, waiting for the approbation and eulogiums with which she confidently expected to be overwhelmed. As soon as Mrs. Lockley had taken one spoonful of the wash, mamma observed that she made a wry face after it (as well the poor thing might), and said: "I'm afraid the brandy is too strong for you, Mrs. Lockley; but you needn't be afraid of it, my dear. A bottle of such as that would not hurt you, I assure you. Now, really, I shall begin to think you don't like it, if you don't finish it." On which, Mrs. Lockley, who is an extremely well-bred woman, answered: "You are very good. It is very nice, I am sure;" and then the poor thing tried to taste it again, whereupon poor, dear mamma, determined not to lose the compliments she innocently thought she was entitled to, tried to prevail on some of the other poor things, who really had borne it like martyrs, to go on with theirs.

But Mrs. Baylies politely excused herself, by saying she thought it was not quite so rich as some of mother's that she had the pleasure of tasting before; and that sweet woman, Mrs. Carter, said that she was afraid the brandy had gone off a little: and so it had, with a vengeance. On which, Edward, lawyer-like, fancying something was wrong, and thinking it a good opportunity to tease his dear, innocent mother-in-law, took a glass himself, and had no sooner tasted it than, instead of swallowing it like a gentleman, he spit the whole into the fireplace, declaring he had never, in all his life, tasted such stuff; whereupon dear mamma, who naturally thought he only said that to annoy her, tasted it herself, and scarcely had she put her lips to it, when she gave a scream, exclaiming: "Oh, that shameful minx of a Mary! If she hasn't been and drank

all the brandy, and filled the bottle up again with nothing but cold tea and unripe cherries." No sooner had she made the discovery than all the poor, dear ladies who had partaken of the mixture uttered a piercing scream, while that unfeeling wretch, Edward, rushed out of the room, and I could hear him bursting with laughter on the landing-place.

All the visitors agreed with mamma, who was boiling over, if I might be allowed the expression, that it was very shameful conduct on the part of the maid, and hoped she would not mind it on their account; and then, taking a glass of sherry to take the taste out of their mouths, they all hurried away.

When mamma and I were left alone, we both agreed to make that Mary finish, before our eyes, the whole of the other bottle, which we thought, of course, she had served in the same manner, and directly afterwards to give her warning. So down stairs we went, and, having brought the bottle from the store-room, we made her drink it all on the spot, though, from the ready way in which the creature resigned herself to her fate, and from the effect it had upon her shortly afterwards, we found, to our horror, that she had never touched that bottle at all, and, indeed, she told me as much when she had finished it, and had the impudence to say she should like to be punished again. So, we immediately gave her warning, and told her not to think of sending to us for a character; but in the evening, the cherry brandy made her so dreadfully bad, that we had to carry her up stairs, and put her to bed, all of which was a mere nothing to us compared with the good humor it put Edward into, who kept telling us, with a provoking giggle, that we ought to be ashamed of ourselves for driving the poor girl into another fit, and said he hoped dear mamma would take care that the next servant she engaged for him wasn't subject to epilepsy.

The next morning, when we came down, we found everything just as we had left it over night; no fire, no breakfast, and all in confusion. As soon as Mary appeared, Edward, being determined to see mamma's treasure, as he called her, off the premises before he left for business, paid her wages up to the very day, and bundled her, with her trunk and bandbox, into the street, where the brazen-faced creature stopped, ringing at the bell, and declaring that she would not go without a month's warning, until she collected quite a crowd all round the house, and kept telling them, in a loud voice, so that all the neighbors could hear, that I had treated her shockingly, and that she had been half starved,

and that I took a delight in making her tipsy,
and that we either couldn't or wouldn't pay her
her wages ; nor did she cease her abuse until

Edward asked a policeman to take her away.
So, there was I left without a servant.

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